SOME THOUGHTS

Concerning the

Proofs of a FUTURE STATE, FROM REASON.

Occaſioned by a DISCOURSE

Of the Revd. Mr. *Joſeph Hallett*, junr. on the ſame Subject.

By HENRY GROVE.

Non enim is ego ſum qui animum ſimul cum homine interire putem, tantumq; mentis lumen poſſe exſtingui; ſed potius, certo tempore emenſo, ad immortalitatem redire. *Cicer. de Conſolat.*

That the righteous ſhould be as the wicked, that be far from thee: ſhall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Gen. xviii. 25.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

THE PREFACE.

THERE *are three different opinions on the* question *concerning* a future ſtate, *as it ſtands on the foot of* reaſon. *The* firſt *is, that reaſon affords no proof at all of a future ſtate, whether of rewards, or puniſhments. The* ſecond, *that a future ſtate is capable of being prov'd, but not of rewards. The* third, *that reaſon leads men to believe a life after this, in which they ſhall receive according to what they have done in the body, whether it be* good *or* evil. *According to the firſt, reaſon leaves ſuch as are deſtitute of the light of* revelation, *equally without* hope, *or* fear, *as to any after-ſtate of exiſtence: According to the ſecond, it leaves them without* hope, *or in poſſeſſion only of ſuch a hope as is next to none, but not without* fear: *The third ſuppoſes them to have ſufficient ground for* both, *according to their prevailing temper, and the general courſe of their behaviour.*

The author of ſome late diſcourſes maintains the firſt of theſe opinions with a degree of zeal and aſſurance, that promiſes nothing ſhort of demonſtration, *and can, indeed, be juſtified only by that. At leaſt, if this be not his opinion, I can't tell what to make of his diſcourſe, particularly, of ſuch paſſages as this;* " Take away the Goſpel, and we *Gen-*
" *tiles* have no proof of a future ſtate; take
" away the promiſes of the Goſpel, and we
" muſt deſpair of life and happineſs beyond the
" grave," *p.* 379. *Or of that* notable principle, *of which he may, for me, challenge the honour of being the firſt* diſcoverer, *and continue ſole and unenvied* poſſeſſor, *that,* in theſe caſes, there is no medium between ſtrict demonſtration and mere poſſibility, *p.* 284. *for, ſurely, he does not think there is* ſtrict demonſtration *for a ſtate of* puniſhment *after death, and a* mere poſſibility, *that is, no proof at all, of any rewards. I ſhall therefore take it for granted, that he is in the ſentiment firſt mention'd; and I will freely own, that even this to me appears greatly preferable to that of ſome others; it being but equal, that if men have their hopes taken from them, they ſhould be likewiſe eas'd of their fears, that they may not be in a worſe condition than the beaſts of the field.*

But hath not Mr. Hallett *himſelf a* reſerve *of miſery for the* Heathens, *tho' it be by them unforeſeen? To what ſtate God will then (in the day of Judgment) condemn the Heathen world, who have never heard the Goſpel, I will not now inquire. Thus much is certain, that their puniſhment ſhall be no greater than their deſerts,* p. 378. *This being doubtfully expreſs'd, I have been willing to take him in the moſt charitable ſenſe, and moſt conſiſtent with his general principle, of* the impoſſibility of proving

proving a future ſtate by the light of nature, viz. *that the puniſhment of the Heathens will conſiſt in their being condemn'd to a ſtate of utter inſenſibility, or annihilation (theſe two being in effect the ſame) which he had reaſon to ſay ſhall be tolerable, in compariſon of that miſery which they who have not liv'd in obedience to the rules of the Goſpel ſhall eternally feel. However, if I have miſtaken him, 'tis of no great conſequence, having taken notice in its proper place, that if the Heathens ſhall be puniſh'd in another life for their wicked actions in this, it is altogether fit they ſhould have warning of it from* their own reaſon, *that they may not ſeem to be deceiv'd into miſery; nor is it to be conceiv'd that a* merciful God *would leave them without all ſuch witneſs.*

Tho' I have declar'd for the opinion of the Heathens paſſing into a ſtate of non-exiſtence, as rather to be choſen than that which makes them neceſſarily miſerable, yet I muſt needs think the third and laſt, according to which they are capable of being puniſh'd or rewarded, hath manifeſtly the advantage of either of theſe two; being more agreeable to the doctrine of holy ſcripture, *better fitted to wipe off all aſperſions from the perfections and providence of God, and of greater ſervice in diſputing with the enemies of our religion. Tell an Infidel, that the Heathen world are, or may be, univerſally and unavoidably in* a ſtate of damnation, *he will be ſo far from a diſpoſition to embrace Chriſtianity ever the ſooner for delivering ſuch a doctrine, that he will be invincibly prejudic'd againſt it on this very account, as abhorrent to the natural notions of mens minds. If you do not ſhock him to ſuch a degree as this, but only endeavour to perſuade him that without a revelation men have nothing at all to expect after death, either good, or*

evil, ſuppoſing he is one that believes a future ſtate to be a plain dictate of reaſon, he will not think the more favourably of that religion which denies he hath any evidence for a future ſtate, when he himſelf is very poſitive that he hath. If, on the contrary, his notion be that there is no after-life, and you, that would make a convert of him to Chriſtianity, allow that his notion is grounded in reaſon, or not repugnant to it, he will never trouble himſelf to enquire, what that which you call revelation ſaith about the matter, looking upon it as a thing incredible, that after God had for ſo long a time left men to periſh like the beaſts (for any thing their reaſon could prove to the contrary) he ſhould by a ſupernatural revelation promiſe eternal life and happineſs to ſome, and threaten others with eternal puniſhment. And, eſpecially, would he be inclin'd to reaſon thus; if a wicked life made him unwilling to ſuppoſe there is any after-reckoning, which I fancy is the caſe as to much the greateſt part *of thoſe who are enemies to the faith of the Goſpel; perhaps of* all *who believe no more of another world than they do of the truth of Chriſtianity. Such men are glad of any pretence for their infidelity, and could hardly have one more plauſible than this, that while their own reaſon tells them nothing of a life to come, all that profeſs Chriſtianity believe rewards and puniſhments that are everlaſting.*

Againſt theſe two ſorts of Deiſts *we are moſt likely to combat with ſucceſs upon the principles eſpous'd and defended in the following diſcourſe: againſt the* latter, *by ſhewing them that reaſon teaches a future ſtate as well as revelation, and the neceſſity of mens reſtraining their inclinations, and living in the practice of all virtue and piety, if they hope to be happy in that ſtate; and that, therefore, they will entirely miſs*

miſs of their aim, which is a licence to act uncontroll'd, in refuſing to come under the yoke of the Goſpel, ſince, beſides the divine right *which the Goſpel hath to their obedience, tho' not acknowledg'd, there is another yoke which they will not be able to ſhake off, I mean that of* natural religion (*as to the great lines of duty co-incident with* revelation) *and the awe of a* judgment to come: *againſt the* former, *by convincing them, that revelation conſpires with reaſon in requiring the ſame duties, and enforcing them by the ſame general motive of a ſtate of recompences after this life is ended; with this mighty advantage on the ſide of revelation, that it gives a plainer and fuller repreſentation of the whole duty of man than was ever done by unaſſiſted reaſon, compleats the evidence of a future ſtate, brings to light thoſe ſecrets of it which the humane underſtanding, involv'd in miſts of ignorance and error, could not penetrate, and ſupplies every thing that was before wanting to render this motive to a holy and religious life, from the conſideration of an unſeen and everlaſting world, as ſtrong and perſuaſive as it was well capable of being made; which I have endeavour'd to ſhew in the laſt chapter of this Eſſay. So that there is no need of having recourſe to* the impoſſibility of proving a future ſtate from the light of nature, *in order to prove the great* expediency *of the* Chriſtian revelation; *and much leſs that we may the more eaſily prevail with the* Deiſts, *laying aſide their prejudices, to examine impartially the reaſons by which the truth of our religion is eſtabliſh'd. So far is Mr.* Hallett's *ſcheme from promoting this deſirable end, the converſion of the Deiſts to Chriſtianity, that ſcarce any thing, in my apprehenſion, could obſtruct it more.*

The rational proofs *of a future ſtate are not without their uſe to* Chriſtians *themſelves; tending to give them a juſter and nobler idea of the religion they profeſs; the excellency of which doth not lie in its being a ſyſtem of* doctrines *and* precepts *altogether independent of natural reaſon, and of which that is no judge. What is it ſets the religion of* Chriſt *ſo much above that of* Moſes? *Is it not chiefly this, that the latter is made up, almoſt wholly, of poſitive inſtitutions, the former hath hardly any ſuch, laying the main ſtreſs on thoſe duties which are of univerſal and unchangeable obligation? One abounds with promiſes of temporal bleſſings, the other of bleſſings ſpiritual, heavenly, and eternal? As much as to ſay, the religion of* Jeſus *is in the eye of* reaſon *the moſt lovely and perfect. Conſequently, whoever demonſtrates the intrinſick beauty of holineſs, and the foundation which the commands of the Goſpel have in the reaſon of mens minds, and the nature of things; whoever goes farther, and ſhews the doctrines of Chriſtianity to be either the reſult of the beſt and pureſt reaſon, an improvement upon it, or not contrary to it, does good ſervice to the cauſe of the Goſpel, and, if he does it from an inward veneration to Chriſt and his religion, is to be eſteem'd a better friend to both than another who, in all matters of faith or practice, looks only to the evidence and authority of revelation; which is putting the* Chriſtian religion *upon much the ſame level with the* Jewiſh. *Among the doctrines of the Goſpel, which we ſhould expect to be not only conſiſtent with reaſon, but taught by it, that of future recompences is one; and when the Chriſtian finds that this is actually the caſe, that reaſon proclaims a judgment to come as well as revelation, tho' it does not ſet it in ſo clear and affecting a view, he hath a pleaſure which the man, who*

never

never obſerv'd this harmony between reaſon *and* revelation, *however pious he may be, is a ſtranger to; and, other things being equal, is leſs likely to make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience. Nay, the homage which ſuch a one pays to the* divine being *is more compleat; for he contemplates God both as the God of* nature *and the God of* grace, *and hears him ſpeaking to him* in divers manners, *by his works, and in his word, by his own conſcience, by the univerſal reaſon of mankind, by the Prophets and Apoſtles, and by his own Son, the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his Perſon; he attends to the voice of God in whatever way directed to him, and reverences every notification of his will, and certainly then is very unjuſtly charg'd with not having a due regard to* revelation, *which is* one *of thoſe ways in which God hath manifeſted himſelf to his creatures, and by him eſteem'd the moſt perfect, becauſe his regard to* that *is not join'd with a neglect of* all the reſt.

'Tis a farther ſatisfaction to the good Chriſtian, who hath taken his faith *wholly from the* Bible, *when he is praiſing God for the many ineſtimable benefits he enjoys as* a diſciple of Jeſus, *to reflect that thoſe, the much greater part of the world, to whom the glad tidings of the Goſpel were never made known, are not utterly abandon'd by* the author of their beings, *or cared for no farther than relates to the intereſts of this animal and periſhing life: but that their* common Parent, whoſe tender mercies are over all his works, *hath provided that they ſhould not want any needful means for their knowing and performing the ſervice he expects from them, and will reward their well-meant endeavours to pleaſe him with more diſtinguiſhing and valuable marks of his favour than the preſent ſtate of things affords.*

affords. One of this temper doth not underſtand the way of magnifying the grace of God by contracting the bounds of it, nor is his eye evil, becauſe God is good. *On the contrary, his religion having obliged him to the moſt extenſive charity and benevolence, and thereby ſtrengthen'd the happy biaſs he receiv'd from nature, he cannot but be moſt delighted with that view of* divine providence, *and feel himſelf moſt powerfully excited by it to the love of God, which repreſents happineſs as a thing attainable by all reaſonable beings, tho' with a ſovereign variety of degrees.*

I muſt beg leave for one remark more on this head, and that is, that the arguments from reaſon for a future ſtate of rewards have a peculiar force and beauty in them when apply'd to Chriſtians, *ſuch, I mean, as deſerve the glorious name they are call'd by. Mr.* Hallett *ſeems unwilling to allow that there ever was one truly good man among the* Heathens. *Whether he had ſufficient grounds for ſo hard a cenſure, is conſider'd elſewhere. For the preſent, let us indulge him in his opinion, and remove the ſcene from the* Heathen *into the* Chriſtian *world, where we meet with ſome examples (too few indeed) of every virtue that can adorn humane nature,* humility, meekneſs, temperance, contempt of the world, devotion, love to God and man. *From the declarations and promiſes of* ſcripture, *we know that ſuch ſhall in no wiſe loſe their reward. But may we not alſo gather the ſame thing from* reaſon? *Let us put the caſe of a ſoul well aſſured of its own integrity, and actuated by fervent deſires of knowing, loving, reſembling, and enjoying God to the utmoſt degree of its capacity: Conſcious as it is of ſuch a ſtrong tendency towards the beſt of beings, in whom it would willingly repoſe it ſelf as its only center with the entire weight of all its powers, and with ineffable de-*

light,

light, but cannot do it by reaſon of the contrary attractions, and the innumerable weakneſſes and imperfections, that continually ſurround it, can it forbear thinking with it ſelf; well, and will this wretched inconſiſtent ſtate never end but with my being? ſhall I never obtain what I ſeek? never reſt till I am become incapable of all action and thought? I will as ſoon believe any thing as this of my maker, that he will caſt off the ſoul that loves him, and leave his own work unfiniſh'd. Let us farther ſuppoſe of a perſon of this character, that he is as unhappy *as he can well be with a good conſcience and hope in God, like* Lazarus, *poor and friendleſs, and ready to breathe out his ſoul in agonies of pain and diſtreſs; while another, neither belov'd of God or man, having not one good quality to recommend him, wantons in wealth, and ſees himſelf in a ſtation not only* ſuperior *to much better men than himſelf, but which gives him the command over them, and the diſpoſal of the ſupplies of Providence, which, like a wicked unfaithful ſteward, he diverts from the neceſſitous object for whom they were deſign'd, and ſpends upon his luſts. In ſuch a caſe, without conſulting the* ſacred oracles, *or even ſuppoſing they had ſaid nothing about the different ends of theſe men, might we not from the* reaſon of the thing *be* morally certain *that their ends would be exceeding different? Might we not appeal for this to every man's inward ſenſe of* right *and* wrong, fit *and* unfit, *and to the common notions and ideas of mankind concerning the wiſdom and goodneſs of the maker and governor of the world? And would not this way of arguing yield a diſtinct ſort of evidence from that of revelation, and highly proper to be inſiſted on in a diſcourſe addreſs'd to* Chriſtians? *There is no need of debating that* previous queſtion, *how men were*

rais'd

rais'd to this divine and heavenly temper? 'Tis enough that there are men in the world of whom the world is not worthy, in whom reaſon is victorious over paſſion, and the ſpiritual over the animal and fleſhly part, men who worſhip but one God, *and obey and imitate the God whom they worſhip; and the* queſtion *is, if it can be made a queſtion, whether ſuch a ſtate of being as theſe ſouls are now in can be conceived to be their* final ſtate, *and to anſwer the purpoſes of a* wiſe God *in forming them at firſt, and afterwards aſſiſting them in the race of virtue, and in their endeavours after perfection? Now had Mr.* Hallett *only conſider'd the proofs of a future ſtate from* reaſon *in* this view, *as propos'd and handled by* Chriſtian writers *for the uſe of* Chriſtians, *not of* Heathens, *and as turning upon the different characters and circumſtances of perſons known to us, he might, methinks, have let them paſs, out of regard to the ſervice they might be of to pious minds, to entertain, inſtruct, enlarge, and excite them; and for the awakening of others, to whom none of the ways of conviction are unneceſſary; and might have ſpared himſelf a great deal of needleſs pains (to ſay no worſe) which he hath taken to deprive them of all their weight and influence.*

If it be ſaid (as Mr. H —— *had need ſay, if he be true to his own* principles, *whatever his practice be) that theſe arguments ſhould have no place in the diſcourſes of Chriſtians, becauſe imperfect obedience (and ſuch is that of the moſt eminent Chriſtians) cannot be ſhewn by reaſon to have any title to a reward, and becauſe farther, theſe arguments are at beſt but probable, that is, no arguments at all, if there be no medium between mere poſſibility and ſtrict demonſtration; I refer my reader to thoſe* chapters *wherein theſe objections are examin'd at large.*

Only

Only becauſe the author ſeems to be particularly fond of this laſt notion, with which he hopes to do wonders, I would, over and above what is offer'd in its proper place, entreat him to conſider whether the faith of the greateſt part of Chriſtians, not to ſay of all without diſtinction, being brought to this teſt, *they will not be in the ſame ſtate of uncertainty about a life to come as the reſt of the world?*

Mr. Hallett *muſt think that there is* ſtrict demonſtration *for the truth of* Chriſtianity. *Be it ſo (as, without doubt, the evidence is abundantly enough to ſatisfy any reaſonable mind) yet few, I believe, will pretend that common Chriſtians are maſters of this demonſtration. The reaſons upon which they aſſent may be ſufficient to juſtify them to themſelves, and to others; but will he ſay, they are ſtrictly demonſtrative? How then comes their faith to be capable of degrees? I proceed; no man can have more certainty for the truth of any propoſition upon the authority of revelation, than he hath of the truth of the revelation it ſelf; and, therefore, not being able to produce demonſtration for the whole together, cannot have it for any particular part. He may be certain that ſuch a doctrine (as for inſtance, that* there is a future ſtate of happineſs for pious ſouls) *is a branch of the Chriſtian religion; but that the doctrine is therefore* true, *he hath, and can have, no greater aſſurance than he hath of the truth of that religion, on the teſtimony of which he receives it. So that, for ought I ſee, if this writer's notion be admitted, Chriſtians are in no better condition, as to their belief of a future ſtate, than Heathens. They may have higher degrees of probability for the ſame thing, but as long as there is any difference between the higheſt degrees of* probability

bability *and* ſtrict demonſtration, *they are equally without any* juſt foundation *for their faith.*

In the ſixth chapter *I have conſider'd the diſtinct influence which* tradition *and* reaſon *have had on the belief of a future ſtate, and endeavour'd very briefly to ſhew, that tho' this and many other notions be firſt receiv'd from tradition, as they unavoidably muſt, yet that they are never the leſs capable of being prov'd by reaſon. I am ſo well perſuaded of this, and the neceſſity of giving to each of theſe its due, that I muſt beg pardon of an ingenious author, to whom the world is much indebted for a late valuable performance, if I think he hath not* expreſs'd *himſelf with all the caution he ought to have done in a matter of ſuch importance, for I would hope the fault is only in the expreſſion. His words are,* " *If we look over all the Philoſophers, and con-*
" *ſider what the treaſures of knowledge were, which*
" *they had among them, we ſhall find that there*
" *were many beams of true light ſhining amidſt their*
" *dark and confuſed notions; but this light was ne-*
" *ver deriv'd from any uſe of their reaſon, for*
" *they never* could *give any reaſonable account of*
" *it.* The inviſible things of God *had been ſome*
" *way or other related to them, and as long as*
" *they were contented to tranſmit to poſterity what*
" *their anceſtors had tranſmitted to them, ſo long*
" *they preſerv'd a conſiderable number of truths;*
" *but whenever they attempted to give* reaſons *for*
" *theſe opinions* (i. e. *Truths*) *then in a little time*
" *they bewilder'd themſelves, under a notion of ad-*
" *vancing their ſcience; then they ceaſed to retain*
" *the truth in their knowledge, changed the true*
" *principles of things, which had been deliver'd to*
" *them, into a falſe, weak, and inconſiſtent ſcheme*

" *of*

" *of ill-grounded Philoſophy* *. *If the meaning of theſe words were that which firſt offers it ſelf, that the knowledge which the* ancients *had of God and divine things was* wholly *traditional* (*tho', by the way, it could not in that caſe be very properly call'd* knowledge) *and that mens reaſoning upon this tradition was their fault, and the firſt occaſion of all the innovations in natural religion; I ſhould freely declare my opinion that the author had attributed abundantly too much to tradition, and advanc'd a notion of the moſt dangerous conſequence, were it univerſally purſued. The error of thoſe, in the firſt ages of the world, was not, endeavouring to give a* reaſonable account *of the* inviſible things of God, *which the* inſpired writer *himſelf ſaith* are from the creation of the world clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made; *but their not being contented with the* conciſeneſs *and* ſimplicity *of the primitive creed, and with employing their reaſon in ſhewing the truth and beauty, and extenſive influence of it. This made them* ſeek out many inventions, *whlch, tho' only the viſions of a fertile imagination, they look'd upon as improvements on the old ſcheme, and labour'd to ſupport by fallacious reaſonings. If* any *tradition*, merely as tradition, *muſt be blindly ſubmitted to, then* all *tradition is to be ſo. And thus* error, *when it is become traditional, will have all the authority of* truth, *or rather, truth and error will be the ſame thing. The extreme, which mankind have moſt commonly run into, is that of reſting in tradition* (*or in the religious tenets and opinions deliver'd to them by their fathers*) *without uſing their underſtanding to examine any part of it, by which means truth*

* *Shuckford*'s ſacred and profane hiſtory of the world connected, *Pref.*

and falſhood have been, partly with deſign, and partly without it, partly by the politicks of men, and partly by the influence of fancy, luſt, and paſſion, mix'd and jumbled together, and ſo have paſs'd down undiſtinguiſh'd thro' following ages. The ſtream of unwritten tradition will naturally grow foul and muddied in a long courſe of time, if men do not keep it pure by a ſober uſe of their reaſon. 'Tis reaſon, therefore, that muſt prevent the corruption of tradition, or, after the corruption is begun, hinder its increaſing, and, if it be poſſible, reduce tradition to the ſtate it was in at its firſt parting from the fountain.

The ſubject of this book hath been ſo well and largely treated by the ableſt writers, ſuch as Mr. Howe, *Dr.* Clarke, *Mr.* Woolaſton, *author of the* Moral Proof, *&c. that I ſhould have been under little temptation to trouble the world with any thoughts of mine upon it, if Mr.* Hallett *had not ſtruck at the foundation of all their reaſonings; and even now, my averſion to controverſy is ſuch, that I ſhould not have meddled in this, if I had not apprehended it to be of the greateſt importance, and that the objections brought by that author would admit of an eaſy and ſatisfactory anſwer. Whether mine be ſo, muſt be ſubmitted to the judgment of the publick.*

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Proofs of a FUTURE STATE,

FROM

REASON.

CHAP. I.

Not natural *for one that* reaſons *and* conſiders things, *to conclude, from what he ſees befal the* Body *when it dies, that the* Man *is no more.*

Sect. I. WHEN a man dies, there's an utter end of his exiſtence, as far as the information of *ſenſe* reaches. But what if it ſhould appear, that ſenſe hath nothing at all to ſay about the exiſtence of any ſuch Being as

Man? What, if the *living* man be as much hidden from ſenſe, as any *future* life of his beyond the grave? My Idea of a man is, of *a reaſonable Being, acting by a body.* The body of man, like any other portion of matter, falls under the notice of the ſenſes; but *Reaſon*, which makes his diſtinctive character, is the object only of reaſon. Among the *brutal Kind*, thoſe which ſee the faces of men every day, and are familiarly acquainted with their voices, have no more notion of an *intelligent Being*, than the wild beaſts of the foreſt, that live moſt remote from the dwellings of men. All the knowledge which the domeſtick animal hath of his maſter, and the reſt of the family, is reduced to certain *figures*, and *motions*, and *ſounds*. And, in this reſpect, the ſenſes of mankind have no privilege above thoſe of brutes. One man can no more *immediately* ſee, or hear, the wiſdom and virtue of another man, than his dog can; or than he can *hear* colours, and *ſee* ſounds.

Sect. II. Well then; ſince it is not *ſenſe*, but *reaſon*, that informs us of the exiſtence of any man, *as a thinking Being*; reaſon only, and not ſenſe, is to determine when the man ceaſes to exiſt. It is true, our knowledge of things, which are not the immediate objects of ſenſe, is founded in it; ſo that if *A.* had not eyes and ears, he would never know that *B.* hath underſtanding and liberty

liberty of choice; there being no other way of diſcovering this, as we are at preſent fram'd, but by external ſigns. But then, as we do not imagine theſe ſigns (*E. G.* words written or ſpoken) have any reſemblance to the Ideas convey'd by them, or the leaſt *natural* connexion with them, ſo we have as little reaſon to confound the body, by the members and organs, of which theſe ſigns are made, with that conſcious, intelligent principle, which orders theſe ſigns, and appoints what their preciſe meaning and value ſhall be. The word *Elephant*, as we find it delineated upon paper, conſiſts of a certain number of letters, which, having no likelineſs, in the figure of them, to the creature called by that name, cannot, any otherwiſe than as the effect of cuſtom and agreement, excite the Idea of it in our minds. Let us lay aſide our prejudices, and we ſhall find that *Matter* and *Motion*, in which two all the properties of a human body are ſumm'd up, have no more ſimilitude, or affinity, with thoſe operations of the mind, by which they are directed and influenced, than the letters found in the word *Elephant* have with the Idea of that animal, and therefore may be, and very likely are, of a nature entirely diſtinct from them. This being ſo, not the leaſt ſhadow of an argument can be drawn from appearances, when a man dies, for the mor-

tality of the ſoul, or thinking principle. All that appears is, that this thinking principle acts not by the body, as it did before. But ſince, before this, the thinking principle was not known to be a *part* of the body, but only to actuate and command it, what ſhould make us believe, when it no longer acts upon the body, that it ceaſes to live, and act at all? 'Tis plain, indeed, the members of the body are without all motion, and the ſenſes incapable of their uſual functions: But did the body move and govern it ſelf, while living? Or did the ſenſes reaſon on their ſeveral objects? Or rather, was it not a principle diſtinct from the body that did all this? And, if diſtinct, why muſt its fate be concluded by that of the body? I hear an organ finely play'd on, and admire the ſkill of the maſter, who readily ſtrikes out any tune that is called for. After a while, the machine becomes unfit for uſe, or is taken to pieces; whereupon, the muſick is ſpoil'd, or heard no more. The muſician was not ſeen by me when he play'd; perhaps, I never ſaw him. Am I therefore to infer, that the inſtrument made its own harmony? Or that the muſician loſt his ſkill, as often as, the inſtrument not being in tune, he could not make it ſound agreeably, and lives no longer, now *that* is deſtroy'd? Whatever difference there is between the relation of a muſician

to

to the organ, and of the ſoul to the body; the caſes are ſo far parallel, that the ſoul is as diſtinct from the body, for ought appears from the firſt view of the properties of the one and the other, as the organiſt is from the organ, though, by the wiſe appointment of the Creator, for a time more dependent.

Sect. III. I confeſs, this is reaſoning after a different manner from a late writer *, whoſe words are theſe: "Let the reader "diveſt himſelf for a moment of all the "thoughts he hath receiv'd from ſcrip- "ture and tradition, and then view the "human nature, and ſee what his mere "reaſon can learn from it. I ſee a man "move, and hear him ſpeak for ſome "years; from his ſpeech, I certainly infer "he thinks as I do. I ſee then that man is "a Being, who thinks and acts. After "ſome time, the man falls down in my "ſight, grows cold and ſtiff, he ſpeaks and "acts no more. Is it not then natural to "conclude that he thinks no more?" My anſwer is; If we keep to the teſtimony of ſenſe, *that* tells us the body is dead. But, farther than this, *this Deponent* ſaith not: It neither affirms or denies any thing of that inward, conſcious principle, which moved the body, becauſe it knows and ap-

* Mr. *Hallet*, in his diſcourſe of the impoſſibility of proving a future ſtate by the light of nature.

prehends nothing at all about it. If we go farther, and will needs *give our judgment* on the preſent occurrence, we may be ready to infer the ceſſation of *Thought* from the ceſſation of *bodily Motion*, as *this Gentleman* does. But, for certain, this would be a raſh judgment, becauſe the Ideas of *Thought* and *Motion* being entirely foreign, and the motions of the body being directed and overrul'd by the thoughts of the mind, it is very poſſible that theſe thoughts and motions may not exiſt in the ſame ſubject, nor in ſubjects that have a neceſſary dependence upon one another; in which caſe, the deſtruction of *one* will not infer the deſtruction of *both*. The leaſt therefore that reaſon obliges us to in this circumſtance, is to *ſuſpend our judgment* till we have ſome farther evidence of the *ſameneſs* of the ſubject of thought, and corporeal motion, or of their *neceſſary and total dependence* upon each other: And if, before they have any evidence for this, it be natural for ſome men not barely to have *unaccountable fears*, not founded in reaſon, but condemn'd by it; but likewiſe to *conclude* that a man thinks no more, becauſe his body moves no more, this will only prove that it is natural for ſome men to be too haſty in their concluſions; which I will agree with Mr. *H*— is no uncommon thing, and, if he pleaſes, will allow him to be an inſtance of it.

Sect.

Sect. IV. How much more is there of good ſenſe, and manly reaſon, as well as ſpirit, and elevation in the dying words of *Cyrus!* When, addreſſing himſelf to his children, he thus ſpeaks: " Think not, " O my ſons, that when I have finiſhed this " mortal life, I am nothing at all; for, " during the time that I have been with " you, you never ſaw my ſoul, but only " knew it to exiſt from its actions and ope- " rations. For my part, it always appear'd " to me a moſt incredible thing, that the " ſoul ſhould live as long as it continues in a " mortal body; but, as ſoon as it removes " out of it, ſhould die, when this mortal " body hath no life, but what it derives " from the preſence of the ſoul. Nay, I " cannot but regard it, as a moſt abſurd " imagination, that the ſoul thinks leſs re- " gularly and wiſely, when it is ſeparated " from this unthinking body. Rather, " ſince the ſoul, being diſengaged from the " body, will be a pure defecated mind, it is " moſt agreeable to reaſon, that it ſhould " then arrive to a greater perfection of wiſ- " dom. When the human frame is diſ- " ſolv'd, every part of man is *ſeen* to re- " turn to its original element, except his " *Soul*, which is *inviſible*, both when pre- " ſent in the body, and at its departure out " of it *.

* *Xenophon's* Κυρε παιδεια.

CHAP. II.

Of probable *Arguments, and their* Uſe *in the preſent Queſtion.*

Sect. I. SO far then all looks fair and promiſing on their ſide, who believe a ſtate of exiſtence after this, without taking in the aſſiſtance of *Revelation.* The next ſtep would be to enquire, whether men have not evidence enough, from the *Light of Nature*, to juſtify their belief in this particular. But, becauſe there is an objection thrown in our way, that affects the ſtrongeſt arguments, which are not ſtrictly demonſtrative, I would make a little ſtop, to examine if it be ſo formidable as 'tis repreſented. The objection, deem'd unanſwerable by the gentleman that urges it, is this: "That "when we are treating about God's actions, "there can be no ſuch thing in nature as a "*probable Argument.* In this caſe, there "is no medium between ſtrict demonſtration and mere poſſibility;—becauſe, in "order to our knowing the probability of "the event, it is neceſſary that we ſhould "know all the reaſons that might be offer'd, "on both ſides, for God's doing, or neglecting to do what men think it is likely "he will do.—While we do not, and cannot know all the reaſons on both ſides,

"we

" we cannot ſay on which ſide the *real* " probability is." I hope this notion is not right; for, in truth, if it be, and we are under a neceſſity of giving up all the *moral Evidence* for a life to come, which hath been always eſteem'd ſo convincing, I fear there are many other things muſt follow after, and that we ſhall find it difficult to ſtop ſhort of a ſtate of univerſal ſcepticiſm in religion. I have the following remarks to offer, in order to clear this matter.

Sect. II. *With regard to the divine actions, the terms probable and poſſible are merely relative to our underſtandings.* It is not *probable*, but *certain*, that God will do what is *beſt* to be done, and what he *foreknows* he ſhall do, becauſe he cannot be ignorant of what is beſt, or under any biaſs to the contrary; nor can he be liable to change. What God will not do, becauſe unfit to be done, it is not ſo much as *eventually* poſſible, much leſs probable, he ſhould do. *Real* probabilities, then, as diſtinguiſh'd from thoſe that appear ſo to fallible and finite underſtandings, there are none; neither *poſſibilities*. If this deſtroy the *probability* that there may be reaſons againſt our opinion, (for ought we know) which we know nothing of, ſtronger than the reaſons we have for it, it will equally deſtroy the *poſſibility* too; ſince what we call poſſible is only ſo, for any reaſon we ſee to make us judge it im-

impoſſible: but there may be reaſons, for ought we can ſay, which, if we knew them, would be own'd to prove *that* cannot poſſibly be, becauſe not fit, and not foreknown, to be, which we ignorantly think *may be*. What then, are we to underſtand by *real* probability and poſſibility? Suppoſing we were ſo fortunate as to diſcover a great many of thoſe *innumerable*, hidden reaſons, which *our Author* is ſo fond of; even this would not do; we ſhould not yet be able to judge *on which ſide the greater weight of reaſon lies*, being unacquainted with thoſe reaſons that are ſtill behind. We muſt, therefore, have *all* the reaſons in nature, both *pro* and *con*, and be ſure we are qualified to weigh them one againſt the other, or we had as good have *none*. But, if we have all, and are capable of determining their reſpective force and value, it is no longer *probability*, but *certainty*. The reſult is, that probability and poſſibility, with regard to what is wiſeſt and beſt for God to do, are merely relative to created underſtandings; and that, therefore, if it be abſurd to deny us the liberty of calling that *poſſible*, which is ſo *to us*, or for any thing we know to the contrary, it is equally abſurd and unreaſonable not to allow men to ſtyle that *probable*, which, to them, appears ſo in the higheſt degree, after all the enquiries which, as ſincere lovers of truth, they can be obliged to make.

Sect.

Sect. III. *According to the common ſenſe of mankind, that is the probable ſide of the queſtion, for the truth of which there is evidence ſufficient to engage the aſſent of any rational, and unprejudic'd enquirer.* It is not what appears ſo to an odd-faſhion'd and wry underſtanding; to a man under the influence of pride, and paſſion; or to a few men, whom caprice, intereſt, or ſome favourite hypotheſis, lead to think differently from the reſt of the world, when the reſolution of the queſtion is of equal concernment to all mankind. Mr. *H——t* is but one of many millions who have an intereſt in the debate about a future ſtate; which, for that reaſon, cannot be ſuppos'd to turn upon *nice ſpeculations*, which he, and a few other ſuch penetrating heads, may happen to ſtart; as, for inſtance, that *in reaſoning about a future ſtate, there is no medium between ſtrict demonſtration, and mere poſſibility.* Is there one of a thouſand, capable of underſtanding ſuch refined *Metaphyſicks?* and of what uſe can that be in deciding a queſtion of univerſal importance, which one man in a thouſand cannot apprehend? ſo that for ought I perceive, Mr. *H——* muſt be content to let the torrent drive, notwithſtanding all he hath done to ſtop it with his hand. After all he hath done, or *can do*, the ignorant multitude, whoſe ſouls, however, are of the ſame worth as his; and among

among the thinking part of mankind, (ſome of whom may be allow'd to ſee as far as he) much the greateſt number, will think it reaſonable to have ſome regard to probabilities; eſpecially, when theſe probabilities are ſuch as naturally do produce the ſame ſatisfaction of mind, or almoſt the ſame, that ſtrict demonſtration could do. Which is the caſe in the argument before us. For, here, all the appearances in the *moral world* are for a future ſtate; none againſt it. Here we find arguments ſuited to every ſize of underſtanding: Here the ſubject hath a light attending it like that of the Sun, which is viſible to all the earth: Here the firſt glances of our minds, our ſimpleſt and moſt natural notions, are but more and more confirm'd by labour'd reaſoning, and the moſt free and large enquiries. The more a man examins, the ſtronger doth the argument grow upon him. Let him make a perpetual progreſs in the improvement of his faculties, brightning his underſtanding, and purifying and exalting his affections; as he is more enclin'd to *wiſh* there may be a more perfect ſtate of things to come, ſo he *ſees* more reaſon to *believe* it. This laudable, and delightful, progreſs of the mind towards perfection, is, among others, a very good proof of what he wiſhes may be true. But, " *does* " *not a judge act wrong to determine in fa-* " *vour of the plaintiff, till he knows what*

" *the*

" *the defendant hath to ſay? when he hath*
" *heard both ſides, or when he hath reaſon to*
" *think he knows the chief things that may be*
" *pleaded on the ſide of the defendant, he*
" *may make a probable judgment; which he*
" *could not do before.*" Let us follow this compariſon, and ſee againſt whom it will conclude. The *plaintiffs*, in the preſent debate, are the *body of mankind*, who have been always in poſſeſſion of this important article, of *a life to come*, and the ground of their complaint is, that ſome men, from an unhappy temper, which makes them take a pleaſure in diſturbing their neighbours, do moſt unreaſonably diſpute their title, and endeavour to rob them of what many among them value more than life it ſelf; tho', in the mean while, even victory, could they gain it, would be to their own unſpeakable loſs, if they are honeſt men. However, as little as they deſerve it, the *defendants* have been heard, and allow'd to produce their *ſtrong reaſons*, which, on trial, have been found to be exceeding weak, or none. Upon which, one might have hop'd the controverſy ſhould have drop'd, and the world been left in the peaceable enjoyment of its *old opinion*. But the *defendants* are not ſo eaſily ſilenc'd. They ſeem ſenſible, that if judgment be given on the evidence that appears, the cauſe muſt go againſt them. In bar to this, their next plea is (and 'tis a

moſt

moſt extraordinary one) that how weak ſoever all their allegations are, *'tis poſſible* there are other things to be offer'd, of greater weight, were they but ſo happy to know them; and, therefore, till it can be prov'd there are no ſuch *latent* reaſons, the judge will only ſhew his partiality in deciding for the plaintiff. I fancy, at this rate of proceeding, we ſhould have but few trials ended in any of our courts; thoſe cauſes, in which the litigants are apteſt to complain of delays, muſt hang in everlaſting ſuſpence, unleſs an *infallible judge*, one infallible in *matters of fact* (for in *articles of faith*, we are told of one at *Rome*) be ſent to try and determin them.

Sect. IV. *On the ſame principle, there can be no ſuch thing as moral prudence*; the objects of which are not things *neceſſary*, as of *Science*, but *contingent* things, which may fall out one way or other, according to the powers and operations of natural cauſes, under the providence of God controlling, or permitting, directing, or over-ruling them; of which actions of God we have nothing to ſay that comes up to ſtrict demonſtration. And yet the value of theſe contingencies, as in games of chance, is capable of an exact calculation. " So it is " in *Agriculture*, *Merchandiſing*, and in al- " moſt all thoſe things about which the in- " duſtry of men is employ'd. In all theſe

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" the probability of the event hath its de-
" terminate value; which, (as an excellent
" author * hath well obſerv'd) is the natu-
" ral reward of the more prudent choice.
" It may ſo happen, (ſaith he) that the
" man who lays an equal wager, that his
" firſt caſt, with a couple of Dice, ſhall be
" two ſixes, wins the ſtake. Nevertheleſs,
" it is demonſtrable from the nature, or cu-
" bical figure of a Die, that there are thir-
" ty five caſes, in which this will not fall
" out, to one in which it will; and that,
" conſequently, the expectation of the one
" is proportionably more valuable than the
" others." Let us apply this to the pre-
ſent Queſtion; and we ſhall find, upon viewing the nature of things, and weighing the reaſons for God's appointing us to a future ſtate, that it is not barely *thirty five*, but *many thouſands* to *one* odds that the *affirmative* ſide of the queſtion proves true. Nor will the *poſſible* reaſons for the contrary alter the caſe, becauſe we are to govern our *belief*, and *practice*, by what appears, and not by what does not; and where there is no juſt ground to ſuppoſe ſuch *inviſible* reaſons, they ought not to be ſuppos'd. I advance farther, and affirm that

Sect. V. *It is the will of God that mankind ſhould yield their aſſent to theſe numerous, and ſtrong probabilities of a future ſtate,*

* *Cumberland* de legib. nat.

which

which are ſuggeſted by the frame of our own natures, and by natures and events of things without us; and that they ſhould form their conduct upon them. The will of God in this matter is not difficult to be diſcover'd. We might gather it from the *analogy* of *civil* and *moral* prudence with that which is *divine*; of which if the former be commendable, in ſuiting it ſelf to probabilities; much more muſt the latter be ſo, and as much our *duty*, as it is our *praiſe*. But I argue farther. It is not *nature*, but the *God of nature* that hath form'd the underſtandings of men, and limited their capacities for knowledge: It is not *chance*, but *providence*, that hath plac'd us in the preſent circumſtances of our being; ſo that if a thing appears highly probable to our underſtandings, not in one, but in every ſituation; not to one or two perſons, but to the bulk of mankind; not to the vain, the ſenſual, the proud, the careleſs, but to the moſt ſober, and inquiſitive; we muſt ſay, that, in ordering the ſcene, as he hath done, our Maker deſign'd the thing ſhould appear, in the manner it does; for he knew, it would naturally appear thus, and that its doing ſo would be no fault of ours. He would, therefore, have prevented this *deluſive appearance*, or, to ſpeak more properly, he would not have been the *author* of it, if he had not approv'd it. But if he ap-

prov'd

prov'd the things appearing probable, *highly* probable, *infinitely more* probable than the contrary, he intended that men ſhould believe the truth of what appears thus probable. He could not expect they ſhould *ſuſpend their judgment*, and believe nothing at all about it, for no other reaſon, but becauſe they have not *ſtrict demonſtration* for it; for this he knew to be *morally* impoſſible, that creatures fram'd, and ſituated, as we are, violently enclin'd to aſſent upon the moſt inſufficient evidence, and of whom not one of a thouſand knows what *demonſtration* means, and when he is in poſſeſſion of it, ſhould with-hold our aſſent from propoſitions that carry the *greateſt* evidence of their truth, excepting what is *demonſtrative*. If we muſt never aſſent, unleſs we have demonſtration, by far the greateſt part of mankind muſt never aſſent to any but *ſelf-evident propoſitions*; being, as to all others, incapable of judging when they are fairly demonſtrated. So that, if men believe at all, (which is unavoidable) they muſt believe upon probable evidence; and, if in other things, in this much more; where the probability is ſo great, and the iſſue ſo momentous. The deciſion of this queſtion, whether there be, or be not, a future ſtate, will make a vaſt alteration in the ſtate of mankind; ſo vaſt, that even a *Priori*, or from the bare conſideration of

the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, we might be ſure he would not leave them at an abſolute uncertainty about it, as indeed he hath not. The ſame arguments that evince the being, and providence of God, will many of them help to convince us of a future ſtate; we are naturally led from one to the other. If it be ſaid, *no*; theſe arguments when applied to a future ſtate are only probable, and probable arguments are no arguments at all; ſtill I ſay, if this be ſo, we are not at an abſolute uncertainty, or *in perfect doubt, it may be, or may not be*, but certain that it will *not* be; for no evidence *for* a future ſtate, is evidence *againſt* it. A life to come being ſuppos'd, the preſent life muſt have the relation to it of a ſtate of trial to a ſtate of recompences; the knowledge of which relation of our preſent to a future exiſtence, would be of excellent uſe in God's government of the world, as a moſt powerful motive to perſuade men to the practice of univerſal virtue, and to reſtrain them from vice and immorality; of which more will be ſaid in another place. Why then have we no ſuch information communicated to us? why are we left entirely in the dark about it? this utter ſilence of reaſon, this *negative argument*, (if it could be ſuppos'd) in a thing which 'tis of ſo much importance both to the honour of God's law, and the happineſs

of

of mankind, that we ſhould be made acquainted with, would warrant us to ſet our hearts at reſt, that there is no ſuch thing. It cannot, therefore, be ſuppos'd that reaſon is thus ſilent, that there is any ſuch negative argument againſt a future exiſtence; nor can it be the will of God that we ſhould throw away all the moral evidence which he hath given us of a life after this; but, on the contrary, that we ſhould hold it faſt, and make the right uſe of it, to encourage our ſelves in the practice of every thing that is virtuous and laudable, perfective of our nature, and conducive to our final felicity; and to avoid whatever hath an oppoſite influence, and tendency. I obſerve once more,

Sect. VI. *Evidence, not ſtrictly demonſtrative in it ſelf, or directly, may become demonſtrative by the circumſtances attending it.* As, for inſtance, when it can be prov'd impoſſible that a thing ſhould have all the likelihood of being true and real, if it be not ſo. It is in this *indirect* manner, that we prove the exiſtence of an *external, material*, world; and, in this manner only, can it be done. For why may not the whole be a mockery and deluſion? It may be ſo, if we conſider only the ideas and ſenſations that are rais'd in our minds by outward objects; ſince all the ſame ideas and ſenſations may be produc'd by the immediate power

of God, without the intervention of a body, or the exiſtence of a corporeal univerſe. And were we entertain'd with ſuch an *empty viſion*, we ſhould have no way to diſtinguiſh it from *that* we are now preſented with. But then, becauſe ſuch a proceeding is not to be reconcil'd with our ideas of the divine *Majeſty*, *Wiſdom*, and *Sincerity*, we are very well ſatisfied, there is a world without us, of the ſame vaſt extent, and adorn'd with all the beauty, proportion and variety, it hath in our ideas; and even far beyond what they can expreſs. We can argue after the ſame manner here; but with much greater advantage. And, I hope, if we had but *equal* evidence for a world to come that we have for the preſent, it would be enough to content any reaſonable man; much more, when the former exceeds the latter. I would only obſerve, by the way, what an odd circumſtance we are in, betwixt thoſe that ſay there is no ſuch thing as *matter*, and others that are as poſitive there can be no ſpiritual ſubſtance; between thoſe who deny we have any proof of the preſent viſible world, and thoſe who would perſuade us we have none of any other world that is inviſible and future. At this rate, we have nothing elſe to do but ſit down, and either laugh, or weep, or ſtare, at the *vain Shew*; according as the diverſity of our conſtitutions ſhall make our *Spleen* ope-

operate. This by the by. I now proceed. We can demonſtrate it to be repugnant to the wiſdom, ſincerity, and goodneſs, of God, to delude his creatures with the belief and hope of a ſtate of things which will never be. When we conſider, that the voice of reaſon, is the voice of God, that our Creator is, in this affair, himſelf our inſtructor, and hath taught us what we are to believe; that our expectation of what *will be* hath its foundation in what *is*; that whether we take a view of humane *nature*, or of humane *life*, look within, or without us, examin the witneſſes together, or apart; ſtill the uniform, invariable, verdict is, that the preſent is not man's only Life; when we conſider that the premiſes are put into our hands by God himſelf, and we only draw the concluſion, and that the concluſion we draw from them is perfectly agreeable to the divine will; when we conſider all this, we may as well ſuppoſe, we are wholly deceiv'd in our ideas of the *moral attributes* of God, as that we may be deceiv'd here. For if we have any notion of theſe attributes that we can depend on, if we can argue from them in eſtabliſhing the truth of the *chriſtian revelation*, and fixing the ſenſe of it, we go upon the ſame ſure ground, when from them we deduce the certainty of a future ſtate. Where's the mighty difference, whether a prediction, or promiſe,

be contain'd in *words*, or in the *frame of our beings*, and the ſtate and circumſtances of the world? When God hath given us ſuch a nature, governs the world after ſuch a manner, and makes it natural, and almoſt unavoidable, to paſs ſuch a judgment on things, that it is manifeſt his *deſign* was, we ſhould believe a certain thing *will be*; is not this equivalent to a prediction, or promiſe, of that thing? I mean, as to the *certainty of the event*; foraſmuch as God can no more deſignedly draw men into a wrong belief, and feed them with groundleſs hopes, by ſuch *appearances of things* as may poſſibly have another meaning than we affix to them, but which he intended we ſhould underſtand as we do, than he can do it by *words*, which have only one preciſe, determinate, ſignification. The diſappointing of ſuch hopes, which are properly of his own raiſing, is as contrary to the notion of *goodneſs*, as defeating thoſe which he encourages by his written word; and his *wiſdom* and *greatneſs* will no more allow he ſhould keep up his authority by the *imaginary* hopes and terrors of *nature*, than that he ſhould do it by *falſe* hopes and fears, founded in a *ſupernatural revelation*. In both caſes, the thing is much the ſame; both with regard to God and man. God in both caſes, is lov'd and fear'd, obey'd and worſhip'd; and poor man amus'd, flatter'd, or aw'd,

aw'd, for the little time he lives, after which, being return'd to his nothing, he will neither regret the loſs of his hopes, together with his being, nor be able to reproach his Maker for having deceiv'd him with them. But whether this would be any inducement to the ever-bleſſed God to make uſe of ſuch an impoſture, I ſhall leave to the judgment of thoſe, who think, in the leaſt, honourably of their Maker.

I conclude from the whole, that we are ſo far from having any juſt grounds to ſuppoſe that there may be reaſons unknown to us, for God's acting in this caſe, quite contrary to what he hath given us reaſon to think he will do, that according to all our notions of his moral perfections, it is certain there can be no ſuch reaſons.

CHAP. III.

The Argument for a future State *from the* natural Immortality *of the Soul.*

Sect. I. I Shall now ſet before my *reader* a few of thoſe many arguments, which *univerſal Reaſon*, if we are diſpos'd to liſten to her inſtructions, will ſupply us with, of a life to come. And I begin with that which ariſes from the natural immortality of the human ſoul. The ſoul is not naturally mortal, like the body; therefore, continues to live, when the body dies. Before I enter upon the argument, I would make a few previous obſervations.

Sect. II. *Incorruptibility expreſſes not the whole idea of immortality.* I take notice of this, becauſe theſe two things are generally confounded. * "*Nihil eſt in animis admiſtum, nihil concretum, nihil copulatum, nihil coagmentatum, nihil duplex; quod cum ita ſit, certe nec ſecerni, nec dividi, nec diſcerpi, nec diſtrahi poteſt, nec interire igitur. Eſt enim interitus quaſi diſceſſus, & ſecretio, ac direptus earum partium quæ ante interitum junctione aliqua tenebantur.*" I chuſe to give this paſſage untranſlated, becauſe it is difficult to hit upon ſuch a number of words in *Engliſh*

* *Cicero's* Tuſc. Qu. l. 1.

ex-

expreſſing very near the ſame idea, which we can be ſure do exactly anſwer to thoſe in the original. The general meaning is plainly this, that the ſoul, being in its nature one ſimple uncompounded thing, cannot be divided; nor conſequently periſh; *periſhing* being nothing elſe but the ſeparation of thoſe parts, which, before, were ſome way or other held together. *Immortality is an endleſs progreſſion, or continuance, in life.* But now, what never had *life* may be incorruptible; as a point of matter that is without *parts*, or, if that cannot be, without all *pores*, ſo as to be in no danger of a diſſolution. Or that which once enjoy'd life, may, for what appears at *firſt view*, loſe it again, the ſubſtance remaining ſafe and uncorrupted. Incorruptibility in a living ſubſtance is indeed a good ſtep towards the proof of its immortality, but ſtill is no more than a *Step.*

Sect. III. *When we ſpeak of the life of a ſpiritual being, we underſtand conſcious life*; which, indeed, is the only proper life; every thing elſe, that goes by that name, being no more than an imitation, or ſhadow of it. Activity is eſſential to the notion of life; but an active principle can never be lodg'd, where there is not perception. Vegetables ſeem to have a principle of life ſhut up in their ſeveral roots and ſeeds, which being ſoften'd and nouriſh'd

riſh'd by the moiſture of the earth, and impregnated by the warmth of the ſun, puts it ſelf forth in leaves and bloſſoms, in flowers and fruit. But, then, they only ſeem to have this principle in themſelves; the motion of their parts being entirely communicated from without. I believe, therefore, it is a point agreed, that the life of the ſoul conſiſts in *thinking*; either the *faculty*, or the *act*; the latter of which is *actual* life, or what may moſt truly be call'd *living*; the other *radical* life; being a kind of medium between *death*, or the utter deſtruction of the vital, conſcious, principle, and *actual life*, or life exerted. For as a ſpirit void of all thought cannot very properly be ſaid actually to live, ſince ſo to live is to act; ſo on ſuppoſition there be a *latent* principle or power ſtill left, which, as ſoon as all reſtraints are taken off, and it is put into a right ſituation, will diſcover it ſelf, and break out into act, that ſubſtance muſt as improperly be ſaid to be dead; having always an active power; and becauſe, if abſolutely dead, it could never *naturally*, and of it ſelf, return to life again.

Sect. IV. *In the language of philoſophy, there is a difference between death, and annihilation.* Annihilation is the extinction of the ſubſtance; death the privation of a quality or attribute, the ſubſtance remaining

ing untouch'd. God by his almighty power is, without diſpute, able to annihilate all created beings; but ſuppoſing any of theſe created beings to be eſſentially endued with life, he cannot kill them in the ſenſe now explain'd; that is, he cannot deſtroy their life, without deſtroying at the ſame time, their entire ſubſtance, or being.

Sect. V. *By the natural immortality of the ſoul is meant no more than this, that the nature of the ſoul is ſuch, ſo peculiar, and eminently diſtinguiſh'd, that it will continue in life notwithſtanding all the jars and encounters of ſecond cauſes.*

Si fractus illabatur orbis
Impavidum ferient (or rather *non ferient*)
ruinæ.

Be it granted that God can diveſt the ſoul of *actual cogitation*, which I believe, and even of its *power of thinking*, which is more than I can at preſent apprehend; yet will the ſoul, notwithſtanding this, be *naturally* immortal; ſince no finite agent, not the whole force of finite beings confederated, can do either. It is provided with a defence in its own nature againſt their moſt violent attacks. But, ſaith a *Writer*, with whom I have had occaſion to ſpeak before, "I cannot well underſtand what men mean

"by

"by the natural immortality of the ſoul. "Every being which God hath made de- "pends upon the will of God for its conti- "nuance in being." Becauſe this is ſo exceeding difficult to be underſtood, let him try what he can do in a more familiar inſtance, and ask himſelf, why *Marble* is eſteemed naturally more laſting than common ſtone, and *therefore*, as well as becauſe it makes a better ſhew, choſen for monuments, and other works of art, that are deſign'd to continue for ages? I am apt to think, it is not from a notion that marble depends leſs upon the *will of God* than other ſtone; but becauſe it is not ſo ſubject to the ſtrokes of *time*. And can he not conceive that for the ſame reaſon as ſome *bodies* are naturally *laſting*, *ſpiritual ſubſtances* may be naturally *everlaſting*, being in no more danger of periſhing by any created force, to eternity, than marble, or any other the moſt ſolid piece of matter, is of being crumbled to duſt, by common accidents, in a moment? In ſhort, had he attended a little to the common diſtinction of immortality into *natural* and *neceſſary*, he needed not have made a difficulty where he found none. That being is neceſſarily immortal, whoſe life is unoriginated, and independent; and, in this ſenſe, God only *hath immortality*. A natural immortality, ſignifying ſuch a life as is deriv'd immediately

ately and entirely from God, and depends on him only, is the privilege both of angels and the ſouls of men.

Sect. VI. The argument now follows. The ſoul is *naturally* immortal, therefore *actually* ſo. That the ſoul is naturally immortal may be ſhewn in few words, taking for granted what is prov'd in another place *, that it is eſſentially indiviſible. For whatever is indiviſible cannot receive any alteration in its properties from finite cauſes; but, as it muſt remain the ſame individual ſubſtance, all created power notwithſtanding, ſo, if ſuppos'd to be thinking, it muſt continue the ſame individual, thinking, ſubſtance, as ever. Among the innumerable changes produc'd in the world about us by the colliſion of bodies, it is plain there is not one but is made by a change in the ſubſtances themſelves, which, by having their parts ſunder'd, or differently arrang'd, put on new qualities. And, according to our conception, 'tis impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe with regard to immaterial beings. But now that any ſuch change ſhould befal an indiſcerpible ſubſtance as would imply a change in its powers, unleſs made by omnipotence it ſelf, is to our thoughts incomprehenſible. Nay, ſuppoſing the thinking faculty to be eſſential, as I am ready to ima-

* *Eſſay towards a Demonſtration of the ſoul's immateriality; which will ſhortly be reprinted.*

gine

gine hath been made out to a high degree of probability *, the ſoul, being one, muſt *neceſſarily*, if it exiſt at all, continue one thinking ſubſtance to eternity. The ſoul therefore is naturally immortal. And if naturally immortal, actually ſo, is the ſequel of the argument.

Sect. VII. The nature of the ſoul affords a fair preſumption of its being deſign'd to continue for ever in being. God hath fitted it for an endleſs life, and therefore intended it for ſuch a life. How is it we come to the knowledge of the final cauſes of things, or ends for which they were made, but by a careful inſpection into their nature, and obſerving what they are adapted to in their frame and conſtitution? for whatſoever the ends are to which they are manifeſtly ſuited, theſe we reaſonably gather to have been the ends propos'd by God when he created them. So the ſeveral ſenſes were made for their reſpective objects. Nor does this hold as to the *uſes* of things only; but likewiſe as to their *duration*, or the time of their continuing to ſerve for ſuch uſes. Things, which *nature* hath fitted to laſt longer than others, were unqueſtionably *intended*, in the ordinary courſe of events, to laſt longer; and do ſo, where nothing extraordinary happens out. No one fears, when he erects a monument of braſs or marble to the

* Ibid.

memory

memory of his friend, that it will fail as ſoon as the body turns to duſt; tho' both equally depend on the will of God. And when bodies do fall into ruin, it is according to the natural courſe of things, from the wearing of the parts by their inteſtine motions, or from the action of ſurrounding bodies, not by the *immediate power* of God. Thus the humane body is deſtroy'd by external violence, or inward decay. But is that a reaſon why the ſoul, which is liable to neither of theſe, but fitted to live for ever, ſhould die with the body? Or why we ſhould think it does? The ſoul, therefore, in its nature, having a plain relation to immortality, may be reaſonably concluded to have been ordain'd for an endleſs life; as long as we have *no reaſons* on the other ſide, and a great many *moral arguments* for its living beyond the grave.

Sect. VIII. If we add, that it is not a bare natural *permanence* but *immortality*; and the natural immortality of a being of very great, and ſingular, *excellence*, the argument from hence, for a future ſtate, will have nothing wanting to it. *Unthinking matter*, as to it ſelf, is not a whit better than *nothing*, nor differs from it; having no conſciouſneſs of its own exiſtence, or perception of any thing beſides. To be, or not to be, is here perfectly indifferent. In this regard, the whole viſible world, comprehend-

hending the heavens and the earth, is not equal in value to a ſingle ſoul. The world knows not that it exiſts, is not entertain'd with its own beauty, is altogether lumpiſh and paſſive, whereas, the ſoul hath capacities for knowledge, virtue, and happineſs, which God alone, who is infinite, can fill. The *natural immortality* of the ſoul ſecures it againſt all the invaſions of *ſecond cauſes*. And its *ſuperior excellence* hints a reaſon why God, by his *immediate hand*, will not deſtroy it when the body dies, whether it makes a *right* or *wrong* uſe of its faculties. Not if it makes the *right* uſe of them, becauſe there is an obvious congruity that a being created with a *remote* capacity for happineſs, ſhould enjoy the happineſs of which, by its own good conduct, it is become *immediately* capable; and, having, by time and induſtry, improv'd its faculties, ſhould have the benefit and advantage of this improvement. Not if it makes a *wrong* uſe of theſe valuable gifts, becauſe it is but fit it ſhould be puniſh'd for its ingratitude, and reap the fruits of its ill management. This clearly proves a future ſtate for all ſouls; whether it does, or does not, with the ſame evidence, ſhew the *eternity* of that ſtate. Bodies themſelves undergo various viciſſitudes; but are not annihilated, and much leſs then are we to imagine this of ſpirits, which are incompa-

rably

rably more excellent in their nature than any portions of matter can be. If it be ſaid, that in the corporeal ſyſtem, tho' an organiz'd body hath more beauty and art in it than a pebble ſtone, or the moſt ſolid maſſes of matter, yet we ſee the moſt curious and elegant ſtructures of this kind come to ruin, and in leſs time than many other bodies. And why may not ſomething like this happen in the world of ſpirits? I anſwer; the caſes are not at all parallel. Material beings are in their own nature corruptible. If they periſh, it is not by the deſtroying hand of God, as I took notice before; but thro' the feeble texture of their parts, and from the impreſſions of other matter. Whereas, the deſtruction of the ſoul muſt be immediately by God himſelf, or can never be accompliſh'd. Every thing laſts a longer, or a ſhorter time, according to its conſtitution. The ſun, particularly, hath ſhone with an unfading brightneſs ſome thouſands of years already, and may do the ſame, for thouſands of years to come. And ſhall the ſoul, which would naturally retain its vigor numberleſs ages after the heavenly fires, without freſh recruits, were all burnt out, be extinguiſh'd with the lamp of the body, which is put out by every little accident? We are farther to conſider, when an organiz'd body falls to pieces, the matter of it does not

become uſeleſs, but goes to make up other bodies. The world is maintain'd by theſe changes, σώζεσι ὁ κοσμον, &c. * the world is preſerv'd, as by the viciſſitudes of the elements, ſo, of thoſe bodies that are compounded of them. This is the obſervation of *Antoninus* the *Emperor*, and *Philoſopher*. And we have the ſame in *Lucretius* †.

Cedit enim rerum novitate extruſa vetuſtas, &c.

Old things are thruſt out by new, which are built out of their ruins. Materials are needed to ſupply following generations. Which is the reaſon, that things always have been, and always will be, fleeting and periſhable, as they are now. And thus while life is beſtow'd on none, as a perpetual poſſeſſion, it is given to all for their uſe. The atheiſtical Poet applies this to the whole of man, which he will have to fall under the ſtroke of death, that the dead man may ſerve to ſwell the bulk of ſome other being

Nec quidquam in barathrum, nec tartara decidit atra.

And the arguing would not be ſo extravagantly abſurd, in caſe man was nothing elſe but a compoſition of matter. But the

* *Antonin.* l. 2. cap. 3. † Lib. 3.

ſoul

ſoul of man is an immaterial ſubſtance; and ſuch a ſubſtance, if uncloath'd of thought, cannot afterwards become another thinking being, or part of ſuch being. For the ſubſtance, being one and invariable, ſhould it again be endu'd with thought, muſt again become the very ſame thinking ſubſtance, that is, the very ſame ſoul, it was before; and ſo nothing is gain'd by this privation. There is, therefore, no reaſon to ſuſpect that the ſoul, a being of ſuch excellent capacities, and naturally immortal, will have its exiſtence cut ſhort by the immediate hand of God, purely, that it may not ſurvive the Body.

CHAP. IV.

In which the Argument for a future ſtate from the deſire of Immortality *is examin'd; and ſhewn to be concluſive.*

Sect. I. THERE is in man *a deſire of immortality.* This deſire is univerſal, being found in all who are capable of forming a notion of immortality. There never was that perſon who could ſubdue it; not even the deſpairing wretch who flies to death for ſuccor, and embraces the hope of annihilation as his only refuge. At the very inſtant he dreads an immortality

which he *fears* will be miſerable, and withdraws himſelf from a life which he *finds* ſo, he wiſhes there were no ſuch reaſon for chuſing death, and preferring the utter extinction of his being; which is a manifeſt argument, that he hath not yet put off the general deſire of immortality. This deſire betrays it ſelf in the moſt profeſſed enemies to the notion of a future ſtate, and the immortality of the human ſoul. Not able to ſuppreſs the deſire, they only change its object, and from themſelves transfer it to their memory. *Epicurus* *, as little as he car'd for his ſoul's living out of his body, was willing to believe that his name would live, and when dying, flatter'd himſelf with the thoughts of ſurviving in the memory of his Scholars, and with the reputation which his philoſophical works would procure him. And *Horace* †, a Diſciple of his, built the ſame hope upon his Poems.

Non omnis moriar; multaq; pars mei
Vitabit Libitinam.

Not all of me ſhall die; but a conſiderable part ſhall elude the fatal blow. But what can be more irrational than thus to ſhift the object of this deſire? and, laying aſide the proſpect of a real, ſenſible, immortality, to ſubſtitute in its room an empty name,

* Diogen. Laert; † Lib. 3. Ode 30.

a ſound, a phantom, which can be nothing to us, when we our ſelves are nothing? ſince we cannot vanquiſh this deſire, we ſhould leave it in its *natural* ſtate, in which it excites us to purſue after ſomething real, and ſubſtantial; not to hunt a mere ſhadow. I call this its *natural* ſtate, becauſe the deſire is not only *univerſal*, but *ſtrictly natural*; it cannot but be ſuppos'd in *innocent* nature, and, therefore, is from the *God of nature*; and if from God, was undoubtedly given with an intent it ſhould be in our power to have it gratify'd. *Nature never gravitates towards nothing*; all its appetites are match'd with ſuitable objects; the ſuppoſal of the contrary implying a defect, not only in the divine *power*, or *goodneſs*, but *veracity* too.

Sect. II. This is the Argument. And upon the whole, I believe, it is a very good one. However, that I may not conceal any thing that ſeems to make againſt it, I ſhall freely mention what hath ſometimes enter'd into my thoughts, and even prevail'd with me to queſtion the validity of it. Without more words, then: What if this deſire was not in the deſign of God when he created man? Will it not, then, be impoſſible to demonſtrate, barely from this deſire, that God intended to ſatisfy it? Can any thing be more evident than that God deſign'd not the gratification of the

appetite, if he deſign'd not the appetite it ſelf? Now that our Maker might not properly, and directly, intend the exiſtence of any ſuch deſire, ſeems to follow from hence, that a creature like man, being ſuppos'd, this deſire will inevitably coexiſt with it, whether God intended it, or no; having a neceſſary connexion with the rational faculty, and the principle of ſelf-love. A being poſſeſt of *Reaſon*, in the extent that man enjoys it in, cannot forbear ſtretching its views beyond any given bounds, and ſo cannot chuſe but have the Idea of immortality, and, being together with this Idea of immortality, fill'd with an unextinguiſhable love of it ſelf, for the ſame reaſon as it wills its preſent exiſtence, (becauſe it loves it ſelf) it muſt deſire immortality. And is it not from the premiſes an eaſie inference, that the deſire of immortality may be, where it was not deſign'd? and from hence, that if it was not deſign'd by God, it cannot any way engage *him* to gratify it; or warrant *us* to conclude that he will do ſo? But (ſaith Dr. *Sherlock* *) "That ſelf-love leads men to the deſire of "immortality, I think a very good argu-"ment to prove, that all reaſonable crea-"tures are immortal, unleſs the very frame "and conſtitution of their natures does ne-"ceſſarily and unavoidably cheat them into

* *Immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate.*

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"fond, and fooliſh hopes." To which may it not again be replied, that tho' it be neceſſary that we *deſire* immortality, yet there is no neceſſity that we *hope* for it? hope is a mixture of *deſire* and *belief*. And if from the *deſire* we will proceed to the *belief* of immortality, we delude our ſelves, and have no cauſe to complain of being impos'd on by our Maker.

Sect. III. But ſhall we thus give up an argument which hath been always deem'd unanſwerable? I imagine, it may be eaſily defended, notwithſtanding what hath been now urg'd againſt it. For, either this deſire of immortality ſprings neceſſarily out of *the reaſon of things*, ſo as to be independent of the divine will; or it does not. If it does not, we muſt then ſay, that it was made a part of our nature by God, when he might have with-held it; that he planted it in our breaſts, and interwove it in our frame: and, in conſequence of this, we are oblig'd to acknowledge, there is the higheſt probability, that he who put it into our nature, did it with an intention to make good what we may eſteem a kind of *natural*, or tacit *promiſe*; eſpecially when it is farther conſider'd, that the *deſire*, without the *hope*, of immortality, would, as things are at preſent order'd, be a torment to the mind. On the other hand; if it be a neceſſary conſequence of the nature of

things, God cannot but approve it; ſince what is neceſſary is good and fitting; no *evil* being neceſſary. Tho' the natures and eſſences of things are in ſome ſenſe independent of the will of God, they are yet entirely agreeable to that will. All that belongs to the eſſence of a thing is a neceſſary part of the goodneſs and perfection of that thing; for which reaſon, God, whoſe will does ever terminate on that which is beſt, muſt be neceſſarily pleas'd with it; and, being ſo, muſt be ſuppos'd to act after the ſame manner as if he was the *free cauſe* of it. In one regard, God produces *freely* thoſe attributes which are *neceſſary*; being free to produce, or not to produce, the beings to which they are neceſſary. And, when they are conſider'd under the characteriſtick of neceſſary, he is, even in this view, *voluntary* in producing them, the will of God always going along with whatever the nature of things renders neceſſary. The reſult is, that God's approbation of the deſire of immortality is in effect the ſame as if he planted it in the ſoul by an act diſtinct from the creation of the being; and equally a proof that he hath provided an object for a deſire that is entirely coincident with his will.

Sect. IV. The Argument for a future ſtate, founded in the deſire of immortality, receives a new acceſſion of ſtrength from theſe

theſe *two conſiderations* farther; that it was manifeſtly ordain'd for *an incentive to virtue*; and that in the ſame proportion as any man's *virtue* encreaſes, his *deſire*, as *a regular tendency towards the ultimate happineſs of his nature*, grows more vigorous, and active. The deſire of immortality was evidently deſign'd as a moſt powerful incentive to virtue. This is the obvious inſtruction it holds forth to us, that we ſhould make it our chief care, and higheſt ambition, to pleaſe that being, on whom our own depends. Is my happineſs, both here, and hereafter, lodg'd in the hand of God? ſurely then, the deſire of future happineſs, by which I am acted, admoniſhes me to think how I may gain the approbation of him, my ſupreme diſpoſer. To compleat the Idea of felicity; Is the perfection of the *human faculties* no leſs neceſſary than that of the *object?* for certain then, it is my intereſt, to be continually employ'd in correcting the diſorders of my nature, ſupplying its defects, and acquiring all thoſe amiable and excellent diſpoſitions of mind which will prepare me for that future, happy, ſtate of being which I ſo ardently deſire. It is not the bare protracting, or ſpinning out, of his exiſtence, that any Man is fond of; but a perpetuity of happineſs; for which our natural deſires and aſpirations teach us to provide, in the uſe of all thoſe means

means that virtue and religion preſcribe to this end. If our inclinations and appetites have any meaning at all, this is the plain meaning, and interpretation, of the deſire I am now ſpeaking of. And there are not wanting ſome who attend to theſe ſecret whiſpers of nature, and *by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality.* And when they follow the intimations which their Creator hath given them of his will in the very frame of their Beings; when their deſire of future happineſs, proves, as God intended it, an effectual motive to the practice of virtue, as the only way to it; ſhall they, after all, be fruſtrated of their aim? Reaſon is ready to cry out; *it cannot be.*

Sect. V. And if we conſider that the influence of this deſire upon a life of virtue, and of a life of virtue upon this deſire, is *mutual*; ſo that in the ſame proportion as any man's virtue is on the growing hand, this generous deſire ſhoots up with it, like a plant of congenial nature, and becomes more ſtrong and active; we ſhall be more ſatisfied ſtill, that we do not argue wrong, when from the deſire of a more perfect, and durable ſtate, we infer the *futurity* of it. The better any man is, the better he is fitted for the proper felicity of a reaſonable creature; a felicity adapted to the beſt part of his nature, and to which the inferior,

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and animal part, is an inſuperable hindrance; a felicity, in fine, of which he hath ſome Idea, but hardly any enjoyment, in this life. This Idea of a higher kind of life, theſe beginnings and preſages of it in the reliſhes of virtue, and the aſcent of the ſoul to God, enkindle the moſt earneſt longings after it. The good man wiſhes, and hopes, that death may not be like dropping the curtain between him and all farther proſpects of God, and things divine, of truth and happineſs: that the ſeeds of knowledge and goodneſs which were ſown in him by the hand of his Maker; which with a great deal of labor, and ſome little ſucceſs, he hath cheriſh'd and cultivated, and which begin to ſhew themſelves, and to bud, and bloſſom, will not be nip'd at once by deaths cold blaſts, and quite kill'd and deſtroy'd; as they muſt be, if he himſelf ceaſe for ever to exiſt. Should I not be unjuſt to the author and encourager of all good, if I entertain'd ſuch a thought, that, when my deſire of immortality fires and animates me in the race of virtue, and every new advance I make in virtue invigorates my deſire of immortality, that world, by which I am allur'd, and for which I am preparing, exiſts no where but in my own heated imagination? It ſeems to me that, on this ſuppoſition, there would be a *double* deluſion, one of *nature*, the other

other of *virtue*; nature would have deluded all Men, and virtue have deluded its followers even more than nature; and, which is worſe, this deluſion, being trac'd up to its ſource, muſt be aſcrib'd to him who fram'd our natures, and hath prompted us to the purſuit of virtue, or the imitation of himſelf, among other motives, by the *deſire of a happy exiſtence after death.*

CHAP. V.

The Belief *of a future ſtate is of the greateſt neceſſity and importance to mankind*; therefore *there is ſuch a ſtate.*

Sect. I. ACcording to the preſent frame of human nature, and circumſtances of human affairs, the belief of a future exiſtence is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the ſupport of every thing good and valuable in the world, that ſhould we imagin all apprehenſions of any after ſtate to be extinguiſh'd, and the perſuaſion, univerſally eſtabliſh'd, to be this; that the ſoul periſhes utterly and everlaſtingly with the body, man would be the moſt *irregular* and moſt *unhappy* of all beings.

Sect. II. *Man would be the moſt irregular thing in the creation:* capable of *religion* and *vir-*

virtue, yet loſt to both. The whole frame of religion, like a noble and lofty edifice, rais'd on a weak foundation, would quickly fall to the ground. That aſſertion of the *writer to the Hebrews* might paſs for an indiſputable maxim, tho' it was not found in *inſpired ſcripture*, that *he who cometh unto God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* The *Being of God* is but one part of the foundation; the other, and that which the building chiefly reſts on, is *God's ſignifying*, ſome way or other, and at one time or other, *his gracious acceptance of thoſe that worſhip him in ſincerity*; from whence they may be able to conclude, that they do not ſerve him for nought. It was the obſervation of the *wiſe man*, which the experience of more than two thouſand years hath confirm'd, that *all things come alike to all*; *that there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to him that ſacrificeth and to him that ſacrificeth not.* For any viſible diſtinction that is made between the moſt devout worſhipper of the Deity, and ſuch as laugh at all religion, there may be no ſuch thing as a *particular providence*; by which I mean the *Almighty's varying his dealings with the children of men, agreeably to their different temper and behaviour towards him.* Does *God always*, or *often*, make ſuch a difference as this between the *pious* and the

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impious? Or does he *ever* do it *in ſuch a manner* that we can certainly argue, from the external diſpenſations of his providence, that he approves one man, and diſapproves another? and that the man whom God approves is much happier, as the favourite of providence, than the other? the notion of a future ſtate being once laid aſide, I deſpair of ſeeing any clear proof of a particular providence; and challenge any one to give an account of thoſe common and ſweeping calamities, which involve alike the innocent, and the guilty. I ſay, laying aſide the notion of a future ſtate; for, upon the *receiv'd hypotheſis* of a world to come, the view of things is quite alter'd, and we have no reaſon to be offended at God's ſeeming diſregard of the man whom he loves; ſince every ſuch perſon hath not only the hope of a future recompence to animate and encourage him, but may depend on his being at preſent the care of providence ſo far, that all the circumſtances and events of life ſhall be made to contribute to his final felicity.

Sect. III. To proceed then; if piety had no marks of the divine approbation in this life, and no proſpect of the leaſt reward hereafter, I doubt, we ſhould immediately ſee the temples forſaken, and the ſervice of the Deity neglected. *Intereſt* and *Reputation* might be call'd in to aſſiſt, but would be able

able to do little towards preventing the general revolt. Theſe, indeed, ſuppoſe a prevailing belief of God's government of the world, and a ſtate of recompences beyond the grave; for were not this belief, but *the contrary*, fix'd in mens minds, not ſo much as the *outſide* of religion would be in faſhion any where. The worſhip of a Deity is eſtabliſh'd in all nations, becauſe men, in all nations, are poſſeſt with a perſuaſion of rewards and puniſhments. Therefore 'tis that publick eſteem is annex'd to religion, and infamy to the neglect of it. Otherwiſe, no man would promote his intereſt or credit by a ſhow of piety. Beſides which, it is to be conſider'd, that theſe motives will go but a very little way. There is ſuch a thing as *inward religion*; and it is this alone by which men can be inſpir'd with an ambitious zeal to ſacrifice every thing elſe to the view of pleaſing their Maker, and ſteadily directed and ſway'd in the conduct of their lives. Now on this religion of the heart, nothing that is merely external (as the favour, and good opinion of men) can have the leaſt influence. Will a perſon that hath no regard but to theſe make conſcience of paying to God the homage and adoration of his ſoul? why ſhould he? why, in truth, need he, when men cannot look into his breaſt, or even into his cloſet to ſee what paſſes there? what is there to bind

bind the ſecret, or difficult and ſelf-denying duties of piety on ſuch a man's conſcience? or, indeed, any duties at all? for conſcience hath a neceſſary reſpect to ſome inviſible Being that inſpects its motions, and hath both a *right* and *power* to judge it. And where conſcience is not concern'd, there will be no ſteady and invariable rule of action, inaſmuch as intereſt may change, and a man's acquaintance happen to fall among thoſe who reckon it no ſuch diſgrace to live in the contempt of all religion; and in this caſe, if he hath an eye only to intereſt and reputation, farewel to his religion.

Sect. IV. There are thoſe who make a great deal of noiſe with the *decency* and *congruity* of the thing. So the *Epicureans* did of old; and ſo others have done ſince, who, 'tis to be fear'd, have, at bottom, been as little in earneſt as that atheiſtical tribe of Men. The divine nature is adorable on the account of its excellencies and perfections. 'Tis fit that men ſhould worſhip God tho' they have no expectations from him. There is a decorum in it; juſt as there is in the reſpect that is paid to men of great power, or of eminent parts and learning; and they that have any ſenſe of what is proper and becoming will be mov'd to their duty by this conſideration. But however plauſible this reaſoning may look, there is very little

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in it. The generality of mankind have no regard to ſuch refined ſpeculations. *Self-love* is the great handle by which religion *firſt* takes hold of the minds of men, which are uſually too groſs to be enamour'd of things that have no aſpect on the condition of their Beings, to make it better or worſe. And they would be leſs likely to have a regard to *fitneſs* in this caſe, becauſe the propriety of worſhipping the Deity, if he did not any way expreſs his acceptance of ſuch worſhip, and it was never expected he would do it, would not be ſo very apparent. The *heathen Moraliſt* * very well argues in confutation of the *Epicurean* ſcheme, which allow'd the *being* of a God, but denied a *providence* and a *future ſtate*; what ſhould make you teach that God is to be worſhipped by Men, if ſo be he is not only regardleſs of them, but of every thing elſe here below? Why, the divine nature is moſt excellent and glorious, ſo as by its own charms and attractives to allure the wiſe man to a veneration of it, *habet enim venerationem juſtam quicquid excellit*. But can there be any thing excellent in that nature, which, being wholly taken up with its own pleaſures, is eternally void of all action from without? *Epicurus, as he afterwards goes on,* took the way to root out of the minds of men all the ſeeds of religion, when he repreſented

* Cicero de nat. deor.

the immortal gods as never extending their ſuccor to the indigent; for he takes away that which is moſt proper to the beſt and moſt excellent nature; ſince nothing is better, nothing more excellent than goodneſs and beneficence. This reaſoning holds in a leſſer degree on the denial of a *particular* providence in this world, and of any life of recompences after this, tho' it be granted that God adminiſters the affairs of mankind; becauſe, on the principles I am now combating, I ſee but little difference between no providence, and a providence that hath no reſpect to the righteous more than to the wicked; and can ſcarcely look on that as true beneficence, or a perfection of the Deity, which flows out indiſcriminately to the worthy and unworthy, not diſtinguiſhing one from the other, either *firſt*, or *laſt*; which makes me venture to ſay of the ſubtle reaſoners (I am ſpeaking of thoſe who deny a future ſtate upon any principles whatſoever, whether of *reaſon*, or *revelation*) as the ſame Author doth of *Epicurus*, that while they own a God in words, they do in effect deny him. But is not *the will of God* alone reaſon ſufficient why we ſhould worſhip him, who have receiv'd our Beings, and every thing that is valuable in life, from his hands? allowing this to be a reaſon of as great weight as you pleaſe with grateful and ingenuous Spirits, and ſuch as uſe themſelves

ſelves to ſober reflection; yet the queſtion is, whether there are many to whom it would *in fact* prove ſo? whether they would not be much fewer than on ſuppoſition of mens being univerſally perſuaded that none who worſhip God ſincerely ſhall go unrewarded? beſides which, all but the religiouſly inclin'd, inſtead of granting that the Deity expected any external marks of homage from mankind, would, without heſitating, decide againſt it, becauſe of his not having given them any intimations of his pleaſure to this purpoſe. The ſumm is, that if men had caſt off the belief of a future ſtate, they would have no reaſon to believe *a particular providence*, which ſeparates betwixt the *pretious* and the *vile*; and, if they believ'd neither the one or other of theſe, there would be no effectual motive left, to keep up *Religion* in the world; nothing that can be ſubſtituted in the room of this great principle, that *God is a rewarder of them that deligently ſeek him*, being ſufficient to anſwer this end.

Sect. V. With Religion, *Virtue* muſt ſoon languiſh and expire, not barely becauſe Virtue grows out of Religion*, and is beſt ſupported by it; but from its immediate dependence on the notion of a governing providence, and a ſtate of retribution. By Virtue, in this place, I mean *a right beha-*

* Παντων των αρετων ηγεμων εστιν η ευσεβεια. Hierocl.

viour towards others, and with regard to a man's ſelf, in oppoſition to injuſtice and intemperance. The exiſtence of a *law of nature* ſuperinducing a difference in actions over and above that which is natural and intrinſick, would not be eaſily made out to the conviction of perſons not willing to admit of any ſuch law. It is, I own, manifeſt that virtue and vice differ in their natural conſequences, and this difference in their natural conſequences may be eſteem'd an argument of their being differently regarded by God. Be it ſo; then, I ſay, our eating the forbidden fruit notwithſtanding all the oppoſition we muſt ruſh thro', and all the inconveniences we muſt ſuffer, before we can come at it, is a conſiderable aggravation of our guilt, as it diſcovers *a heart more fully ſet in us to do evil.* And vice, the more aggravated it is, muſt merit the ſeverer puniſhment. But how is it puniſh'd, if there be no other life? only as it claſhes with the *conſtitution of our natures*; not as attended with the aggravation of being committed in defiance of its *known* and *experienc'd* evil. This Circumſtance, tho' it beſpeaks a greater daringneſs in doing wickedly, is not conſider'd and provided againſt by the *governor of the world*: as, indeed none of thoſe circumſtances are, which vary the degrees of evil in an action *to infinity*. The natural conſequences of a bad

bad action are the ſame (as, *for example*, of exceſs) whether it be done knowingly, or ignorantly, on a ſurprize or deliberately, with the full conſent of the will, or with a mixture of involuntarineſs, under a ſtrong temptation or a very ſlight one. Or, if there be any odds, the moſt hardy ſinners, your *veterans* in vice, ſuffer leaſt. And what now is become of the divine law and government, when the greateſt offenders come off *as well* as others, and it may be, *better?* put the caſe farther, that a man judges it his wiſeſt part to chuſe vice, with all its diſadvantages, in ſome inſtances of it, and in certain circumſtances, before a ſtubborn, inflexible virtue, (as 'tis very poſſible he may, on the proſpect of annihilation) what is there to encline ſuch a one to think that God doth any way intereſt himſelf in the matter, and hath not rather left him at his liberty to purſue *that courſe* which will bring him in moſt pleaſure? and what *that* is, every man will be ready to fancy he can judge beſt for himſelf. From hence would not men infer they were under no obligation but to *ſocial virtue*, and this not an obligation from *law* ſo properly as from *mere reaſon*, which will not allow us to do to another what we would not that he ſhould do unto us. A life of ſoftneſs and indulgence to ſenſual inclinations would have little criminal in it; the

Apoſtle Paul himſelf ſeeming to give us leave to reaſon in this caſe, as the votaries of pleaſure do, *let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die. To morrow* we die, and are as before we were born; let us therefore live *to day.* 'Tis true, he immediately adds, *be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*; in which words he warns us againſt the principle as moſt falſe and pernicious, that man dieth as the beaſts, without cenſuring the deduction from it, that, *dying* as the beaſts, it would be no great matter if we *liv'd* as they.

Sect. VI. But could we, with the *ſame* ſtrength and clearneſs, demonſtrate the *obligations* to virtue, whether there *be* or *be not*, a future ſtate, yet the *Cauſe* of virtue would be very little advanc'd by this means. Between virtue and vice there is an irreconcileable war; and, where the victory will fall, is not difficult to gueſs, if virtue *ſingly*, or with only a few feeble, and ſometimes treacherous, aids, be left to encounter with an army of vulgar opinions, eſtabliſh'd cuſtoms, loud and impetuous paſſions, that are liſted on the ſide of vice, and cloſely link'd together by one common intereſt. Paſſions muſt be oppos'd to paſſions; the hopes and fears of a life to come, to the love of wealth, power, pleaſure, to diſcontent, envy, pride, anger, revenge, and the dread of thoſe numerous evils to which

a man may happen to expoſe himſelf by his adherence to the intereſts of virtue. It is not only agreeable to reaſon, but of the greateſt uſe to mankind, (ſaith one of the *Antients* *) that they be given to know that the gods will baniſh to the greateſt diſtance from their abodes all thoſe who are wicked in their lives; the conſideration of which, if men have any awe of God upon their minds, will be the principal thing that keeps them from criminal actions. And tho' they who think the ſoul to be mortal (ſaith another of them †) may talk ſpeciouſly on the ſubject of virtue, yet they cannot be in earneſt: All theſe auxiliaries which we may call in to the aſſiſtance of virtue, after we have diſcharg'd the belief of another life, being far from an equal match for the inclinations of the body, and the temptations of the world.

Sect. VII. *Honour* is a fine word, and for few, or none, but fine people. *Vulgar minds* are too coarſe to be capable of ſo delicate a ſenſation. And 'tis very much to be queſtion'd whether the greater part of thoſe who in ordinary caſes are ſome way influenc'd by this principle, would find it proof againſt the aſſaults of uncommon temptations. Virtue is eſteem'd honourable, either becauſe it is becoming our *rank* and *ſtation in life*; or the *dignity of our nature*;

* Cicer. de Conſol. † Hier. in Carm. Pythag.

ture; and vice diſhonourable, for the contrary reaſons. But as to that honour which conſiſts in a man's acting agreeably to his *profeſſion*, or *birth and condition*; every body knows, it hath no other ſtandard but *faſhion* and *opinion*, which arbitrarily ſtamp the name of brave and honourable on the moſt unreaſonable actions, and moſt deſtructive of the order of ſociety, and rights of mankind, no leſs than on thoſe that are moſt reaſonable and uſeful; of which the cuſtom of *duelling* is an undeniable inſtance. The *dignity of human nature* is a conſideration of great weight, if the governing principle in man be immortal; otherwiſe, is a mere trifle. For what mighty preheminence hath man above the beaſt, if the man dies as the beaſt does? In eſtimating the value of things, their durableneſs is to be taken into the account. The moſt excellent faculties alone are not ſufficient; becauſe the real worth of any endowment is in a *ratio* compounded of the *endowment it ſelf*, and the *time* of poſſeſſing and enjoying it. Let us imagine a creature of *angelical perfections* to be brought into being one hour, and turn'd out of it the next: knowing this before hand, he would have little reaſon to value himſelf on his vaſt capacities; to ſtand upon the punctilios of reſpect from other beings; or to make the dignity of his nature the

rule

rule of his actions, rather than his lower inclinations, if he had any ſuch, that were clamorous and importunate, like thoſe which we are ſubject to. Now to man who hath the idea of eternity, the little difference there is between an hour, and a duration of forty or threeſcore years, muſt appear as nothing. Whoever, therefore, ſhould boaſt of the dignity of his nature, believing that after a momentary exiſtence, and *that* obſcure and wretched too, he ſhall return to his original darkneſs, would only deſerve to be laugh'd at. Juſt ſo, do kings and emperors on the ſtage ſtrut in mock majeſty, and ſpeak as big as if allied to the gods, till, retiring behind the ſcenes, they are ſtripp'd of their robes and titles, and paſs undiſtinguiſh'd in the crowd.

Sect. VIII. The *beauty of virtue* is much talk'd of by thoſe who are, or would be thought, her admirers. And, without all doubt, virtue is a moſt lovely form, and hath charms enough to make her ſelf-belov'd for her own ſake ; *belov'd*, I ſay, but not always *choſen*. Had virtue nothing but her beauty to recommend her, either in hand or reverſion ; men might *praiſe* virtue, and be *in love* with it as much as you pleaſe, but would *marry* intereſt. Nor would their conduct, upon examination, be ſo exceeding blameable, ſince *neceſſity* is to be conſulted before *ornament*. And, where-

whereas it may be ſaid that *moral beauty* is not a mere outſide, but a real excellence, and a complication of good qualities; it is natural to ask, if virtue be ſo deſerving, why is it not more in favour with the great *parent of the univerſe?* Why is ſhe turn'd off without a fortune? This does not look as if ſhe merited the character ſhe hath among mortals; or as if the Deity concern'd himſelf much what reſpect and uſage ſhe met with. But virtue hath nothing ſettled on her, becauſe *ſhe needs nothing*; ſhe is *ſelf-ſufficient*. How can that man ſhiver in the coldeſt ſeaſon, who hath this cloak to wrap himſelf up in? *Mea virtute me involvo* *: Or how complain of hunger and penury, who feeds on this luxurious diet? I muſt own, I always ſuſpect ſome ill deſign, as often as I hear virtue complemented at this extravagant rate. It is not out of any real kindneſs to virtue, but to inſinuate, that there is no life to come, no future reward, becauſe virtue can do well enough without it, and is not ſo mercenary as to expect it; by which means, theſe men betray the cauſe which they make a ſhew of ſo much zeal in defending, by cutting off its neceſſary ſuccors. "As to "the *fortreſs*, *temple*, or *palace* of virtue "ſituated on a mountain, after the emble-"matical way, as we ſee repreſented in

* Hor.

"ſome

" ſome pieces wrote upon this ſubject;
" there is nothing (ſaith a noble author) of
" this kind expreſt by our hiſtorian; and
" ſhould this, or any thing of a like na-
" ture, preſent it ſelf in our deſign, it
" would fill the mind with foreign fancies
" and myſterious views, no way agreeable
" to the taſte and genius of this piece.
" Nor is there any thing at the ſame time
" on pleaſures ſide by way of oppoſition to
" the palace of virtue, which if expreſt,
" would on this account deſtroy the juſt
" ſimplicity or correſpondence of our
" work *." I would hope that the ſecret of this is not that the author would have us look no further than the preſent life for the reward of our virtue; virtue is its own reward. But, with ſubmiſſion, even on this foot, the piece, conſider'd only as it ſtrikes the imagination, is not well deſign'd. The ingenious author hath ſeen fit himſelf to let the mountain ſtand; whereas he ſhould either have taken both the *mountain*, and *temple*, or have left out both. A ſteep and craggy mountain (by which is emblematically ſignify'd the difficulty of a virtuous courſe) affords of it ſelf but a diſagreeable idea; and when virtue points her *hero* to the mountain, it was but little encouragement ſhe gave him to try the aſcent, that he ſhould have his labour for his pains,

* *Judgment of* Hercules *by the late Lord* Shaftsbury.

and

and being arriv'd to the ſummit, and finding nothing there to pay him for ſo many weariſom ſteps, ſhould only think how to come down again without hazarding his neck. There is a pleaſure in virtue, a very great one; but then this pleaſure is moſt ſenſible after a perſon hath conquer'd the difficulties of it, and attain'd to a habit of acting virtuouſly; that is, after he is got to the top of the mountain, where he may, therefore, juſtly expect to meet with verdant plains, with a noble and well furniſh'd palace, to repoſe himſelf in after his fatigues, and to enjoy the pleaſure reſulting from the contemplation of the moſt glorious objects, and an everlaſting friendſhip with wiſe, kind, and happy ſpirits. Labor is never to be choſen for labor's ſake. As for ſenſual pleaſure, there is no occaſion for any thing on her ſide to anſwer to the palace of virtue; all her allurements are preſent, beds of flowers, garlands of roſes, rich banquets, ſoftneſs, and gayety; but ſhe hath no farther proſpects; or none but what are ſad and gloomy. The opinion of the *Sadduces*, that there are no future recompences, is ſuppo'd to have been firſt occaſion'd by a miſtake of their founder *Sadocus*, who, with the other diſciples of *Antigonus*, having been taught to ſerve God without any view to an after reward, imagin'd his maſter's meaning, to be that

no

no reward was to be expected, beſides the preſent pleaſure of a religious life; becauſe this reward being *ſufficient*, there was *really* no other. So *dangerous a thing* is it to repreſent virtue and piety as ſtanding firm enough on their own baſis, without the hope of future happineſs to ſupport them; I may add, ſo *ſuſpicious* in the manner it is done by ſome. This is not unlikely to be the reaſon that the *Stoicks* very often talk ſo coldly and doubtfully about the *ſoul's immortality*; for their *wiſe man* being *ſelf-ſufficient*, was ſure to be happy for the time he exiſted, whether that time was longer or ſhorter, in defiance of all the evils of life, and the apprehenſions of death, as what might poſſibly for ever end his being.

Sect. IX. It muſt be acknowledg'd, that *benevolence* is a moſt ſerviceable principle, hardly leſs neceſſary in the *moral world* than the *law of attraction* is in the *corporeal*; and, perhaps, as univerſal; a wiſe, and kind proviſion of the God of nature, by which men are inſenſibly reſtrained from doing injurious actions, and prompted, as by a moſt powerful *impetus*, to acts of kindneſs and compaſſion. But then, there is another principle in human nature, ſtiled *ſelf-love*, which works more certainly, and irreſiſtibly than this; and therefore, whatever benevolent inclinations are planted in the heart of man, they cannot exert themſelves in ſenſible effects,

fects, without the leave of the reigning paſſion. The object of *ſelf-love* is *ſelf-intereſt*, real, or apprehended; between which, and the intereſt of other men, as often as there happens to be a diſpute, which cannot be terminated without ſacrificing one to the other, 'tis eaſy to foreſee which will be given up. Where a perſon hath *two* intereſts of his *own* to purſue; a leſſer and a greater; one in this life, the other in the next; his natural benevolence, enforc'd by a ſenſe of duty, and reflections on the amiableneſs of this temper, may not find much oppoſition from ſelf-love, when it perſuades him to forego the Advantage which an act of injuſtice promiſes him, or to ſubmit to the pain and loſs that muſt be ſuſtain'd in doing good: eſpecially, when ſelf-love knows it ſhall not only be indemnified, but find its account in every inſtance of reſignation. Not ſo, when this life is ſuppoſed to be *our all.* Conſidering the many ſhapes under which ſelf-love appears, as of avarice, ambition, ſenſuality, ſloth; partly ariſing from temper and complexion, and partly from falſe opinions of the things, in which the happineſs of Life is imagined to conſiſt; as the inclinations and intereſts of men will be perpetually interfering, ſo benevolence will generally plead in vain againſt ſelf-love, having no propoſals to make of a return. From hence may be infer'd the ſmall dependance

pendance we can have on *publick ſpirit*; unleſs it happens to be the character of the times; in which caſe it is not to be aſcrib'd to nature or virtue, ſo much as to cuſtom and education, which may take another and very different turn, as we know they did among the ancient *Romans*. It was the opinion of an eminent heathen writer *, that no man, without great hopes of immortality, would offer himſelf to death for his Country. To be ſure, mankind, in general, would think they had but little Reaſon to make ſuch ſacrifices; nay, and the profeſſors of virtue themſelves, who would be ready to ask, "Why, under the name of virtue, "ſhould we abandon the body, if the ſoul "ſo periſh with it, that even that virtue "ſubſiſts no longer, the love of which makes "us willing to die †.

Sect. X. *Fear* of the many evils which threaten vice in *this world*, particularly from the ſtroke of *publick juſtice*, beſides that it can at beſt produce but a *negative virtue*, is very inſufficient, even for that purpoſe. Let the inſtances of men ruin'd in their fortunes, ſhatter'd in their conſtitutions, expoſed to ſhame, and infamy, and death, by their crimes and immoralities, be never ſo frequent; they, who had nothing more to fear, would not much regard the warning; but, on a vain confidence of

* Cicero, Tuſc. Qu. L. 1. † Hierocles.

eſcaping

eſcaping better than others, by a cloſer and more skilful management, would venture the conſequence; and harden themſelves with ſuch ſayings as this, That they had better run a diſtant hazard of periſhing once for all, in the purſuit of wealth and pleaſure, than live always poor, and indolent.

Sect. XI. *Natural conſcience* may be thought to make any other guard upon virtue needleſs. But they who believe ſo, ſhew themſelves never to have examined very narrowly, by what means conſcience comes to have any influence *at firſt*, on the generality of mankind; that it is not, as it *convinces* them of their duty, and exerciſes its authority in paſſing judgment upon actions, as good, or bad; but by thoſe *hopes* and *fears* which are always at hand to back its ſentence. Now take away the hopes and fears of an *inviſible world*; and the hopes and fears of an *inviſible God* will vaniſh of courſe, or be too weak to have any conſiderable effect. And from all this, is not the concluſion unavoidable, that, the doctrine of *no future ſtate* being univerſally received, virtue would decline, and vice grow and advance apace; bad men would be worſe, and many of thoſe who are now in the intereſts of virtue, would fall off to the contrary party; and the few that under all diſcouragements, remain'd ſtill attach'd to the forlorn Cauſe, would be virtuous from a

felicity

felicity of temper, as *Cicero* obſerves of the *Epicureans*, rather than on the ſtrength of principle?

Sect. XII. The *Antediluvian race* are a moſt remarkable inſtance of what may be expected from caſting off all belief of an after ſtate. The leading ſin of that generation of men, doth not ſeem to have been *idolatry*; but, by the few hints that are left on record concerning their character, *an utter diſregard of a governing providence, and a future account*; of both which fundamental principles of religion they made ſhipwreck together. Into this fatal error, it is moſt probable, they were betray'd by their *longevity*; for, being let alone to follow their inclinations for ſo many hundred years, they concluded that *God had given the earth to the children of men*, ſo as to be retir'd himſelf from the ſcene of action, and to leave them to make the beſt of this life, ſince they had no other to look for. And why might it not be to give a check to this reigning ſpirit of infidelity in the old world, that *Enoch propheſied of the coming of the Lord with ten thouſands of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that were ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they had ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſayings which ungodly ſinners had ſpoken againſt him?* And

that he was afterwards tranſlated, without ſeeing death? After mankind had corrupted themſelves to this degree in their *principles*, we cannot be ſurprized to read that *the earth was filled with violence*, and that *the wickedneſs of man was great* upon it: In other words, that there was an inundation of all manner of crimes and diſorders; though, if the *ſacred hiſtory* had not given us an account of it, we ſhould hardly have thought it poſſible that the deluge of wickedneſs and impiety ſhould have been as univerſal as that of water, with which it was puniſhed; no more than one man and his family, being ſaved from the common deſtruction, of the many millions to which mankind muſt, by that time, have encreas'd. In this example we ſee the natural iſſue of infidelity. Infidelity having over-run the earth, is followed with a total and incurable depravation of manners; and this with the ruin of the vile and degenerate race. This is the *firſt conſideration*. Man would be much more *irregular* and *lawleſs* than he is, without the belief of a future ſtate. Proceed we now to the next ſtep in this view of things.

Sect. XIII. *Deſtitute of all belief of a world to come after this, man would be a moſt unhappy being.* Reaſon would not be a privilege, but a torment; not a diſtinction to be glo-

gloried in, but deplored; and they who moſt improv'd their reaſon (which, one would think, ſhould be agreeable to the intention of nature) would only hereby exalt and quicken their ſenſe of the wretched ſtate of being they were doom'd to. Whether we ſuppoſe men to be in a proſperous, or calamitous condition, enjoying the good things of life, or ſuffering its evils, as in the former caſe, they would be far from content and happineſs, ſo they would have no allay of their miſery in the latter. Brute creatures, who either think not at all, or have their whole attention confin'd to the preſent ſenſation, ſuffer death without fearing it: Let them be free from pain, and they enjoy life to the very laſt moment of it. But man is otherwiſe form'd: He ſees death advancing towards him, while it is yet at a diſtance; he knows that he cannot decline its ſtroke, and muſt therefore expect it with inward horror and trembling. This imagination draws a black cloud over life, which covers the proſpect with a diſmal gloom, that nothing can diſpel but the cheering light of the upper world. And to none is the meditation of death ſo unwelcome as to thoſe who have ſome reaſon to value life for its being furniſhed to their wiſh, with a variety of enjoyments, and embitter'd with no conſiderable misfortunes. The more

happy theſe on other accounts, the more unhappy muſt they be in their knowledge that they muſt die: It is very true, the reflection that they muſt ſhortly be no more, would be reckon'd a very good argument for giving the moſt unbounded looſe to pleaſure, that was conſiſtent with that pleaſure they purſued; not that this reflection it ſelf would give a reliſh to their ſenſuality; not that theſe men of pleaſure would care to have the coffin and the winding ſheet, the darkneſs and putrefaction of the grave always before them. Theſe are diſagreeable ideas, which they would baniſh out of their minds as much as poſſible; for were death admitted to their entertainments, the roſes would immediately wither, and the wine turn flat and ſower. And therefore, when *Horace* calls upon his companions to indulge to mirth and jollity, becauſe they muſt do it *now or never*; if his meaning was, that, in the midſt of their cups, they ſhould quicken one another with this grave admonition; as great a *maſter of pleaſure* as he paſſes for, he was certainly miſtaken, and could not have put a more unlucky thought into their heads; for what can appear joyous to thoſe who are perpetually poring on their approaching end *?

* Cicero.

What

What view the ancient *Egyptians* had in making the dead their gueſts, is uncertain. The immortality of the ſoul being their *national belief*, it is moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe, the preſence of the dead was deſign'd, not to heighten, but, to qualify their joy.

Sect. XIV. If we go on to view life on its darkeſt ſide; and think of the many infelicities to which all are ſubject, and of which ſo large a portion falls to ſome (*few*, it may be, compar'd with the reſt of mankind, but *a great number*, abſolutely taken) to whom exiſtence is ſo far from a favour, that it would be their wiſdom to throw it up, had they nothing farther to look for; What refuge can be found but in the hope of a better life? without this, it would be natural for thoſe under great diſtreſs, to think themſelves juſtified in bewailing their hard lot, and oblig'd to the *author of their beings* for nothing ſo much as having put it in their power to end their troubles, when they pleas'd, by a voluntary death, which (ſaith *Pliny* the elder) is the beſt gift that God hath confer'd on wretched

Proxima deinde tenent moeſti loca qui ſibi letum
Inſontes peperere manu, lucemq; peroſi
Projecere animas quam vellent æthere in alto
Nunc & pauperiem, & duros perferre labores!

Virg. Æneid. l. 6.

man. How common is ſelf-murther now? How much more common would it be; were men neither ſupported under their afflictions by the conſideration of their being only intended for the trial of their patience, the correcting their evil inclinations, and the encreaſe of their reward; nor with-held from making their eſcape by the fear of exchanging their preſent miſeries for ſtill greater, and more hopeleſs in a future ſtate? I would recommend it to thoſe who labour to weaken the evidence for a future ſtate, among many other ill conſequences of their notion, to reflect on this.

Sect. XV. *Lucretius* celebrates his hero for having routed thoſe gloomy phantoms which till then had held mankind under a ſuperſtitious bondage. Now allowing *Epicurus* the glory of his pretended diſcoveries, and ſuppoſing his doctrine of no-exiſtence after death to be in poſſeſſion of univerſal credit, what would be the bleſſed conſequence? Men would be haunted no more with the dread of another life: and, let it be added, neither would they have the hope of it to encourage and animate them. All the benefit would be to the vitious part of the ſpecies, the great diſturbers of human ſociety; as to whom, it is for the intereſt of the world that they ſhould never be deliver'd from their terrors;

rors; while the good would loſe one of there principal motives to their being ſo, *viz.* the pleaſure they take in the expectation of a happineſs which an ill natur'd, or ſtill changing world, and a crazy or ungovernable body conſpire to keep them out of here. And the farther perſons were advanc'd above the level of beaſts, and the greater the progreſs they had made in knowledge and virtue, the greater in proportion would be their unhappineſs, having no hope of that which they cannot but ardently deſire at the ſame time that they are ſuppos'd not to believe it. They would in this caſe be neceſſarily unhappy, and the more unhappy the leſs they deſerv'd it. Whereas in the inſtances of thoſe whom the proſpect of a future ſtate renders uneaſie, their uneaſineſs commonly ariſes from a wrong uſe of their liberty. Did they behave as they ought to do, they would readily acknowledge the hope of another life to be worth more than all the enjoyments of the preſent. Upon the whole; we ſee that ſhould men believe this to be their only life, *all* would be unhappy; the *wicked*, becauſe they could not but abhor the loſs of this life, tho' fearleſs of any other, and *good men* yet more than they. But of thoſe that believe a future ſtate, excepting a few under the dominion of melancholy, none are burthen'd with this belief, but ſuch as

neglect a due preparation for that ſtate, which is their own fault, and merits the diſquietude that attends it.

Sect. XVI. Now the matter ſtanding thus, that the belief of a future ſtate is of ſo great neceſſity and importance to mankind, and the belief of the contrary ſo great a prejudice; the argument from hence turns on the following queſtion, *Whether it be, or be not, the will of God that men ſhould entertain the belief of a life to come?* That it cannot be his will that they ſhould disbelieve any after ſtate, (beſides what hath been offer'd elſewhere) this conſideration alone doth abundantly prove, that then he muſt be perfectly indifferent about the growth of evils againſt which he had made no proviſion, and regardleſs of what the *worſt* men did, or the *beſt* ſuffer'd; a ſuppoſition not to be made concerning the wiſe and gracious governor of the world. But, on the other hand, if God would have men to embrace and cheriſh the opinion of a future exiſtence, unqueſtionably this opinion cannot be falſe; unleſs, we will ſay, that the ſupreme being governs the world by *a lie*; having no other rewards for the virtuous but deluſive hopes, and fantaſtick pleaſures, and no puniſhments for the wicked but terrors that are altogether chimerical and vain. And who dares to ſay this that ſeriouſly believes the world to have

have a *governor?* eſpecially, when there is reaſon to think that the governor of the world could have as effectually attain'd the ſame end in a way more conſiſtent with the honour of his attributes; as for inſtance, by enduing the human ſpecies with a lower degree of underſtanding, more temperate deſires and paſſions, and benevolent inclinations, by which all theſe inconveniences had been prevented, without having recourſe to a falſhood, which therefore, be it far from any man to impute to his Maker.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Univerſality *of this belief; how occaſion'd, and what we are to argue from it.*

Sect. I. THERE is no principle that hath taken deeper root in the human mind, and prevail'd more, than the *exiſtence of a Deity.* And yet as wide as this principle hath ſpread, it hath hardly met with a more general reception than the notion of a life after this. It hath been affirm'd by ſome travellers, that there are people among whom no traces are to be found of this fundamental truth, that *there is a God*; while others, who pretend to have been more exact in their enquiries, deny

deny it; as, indeed, they have the *reaſon of the thing*, if not *obſervation*, on their ſide. But however that be, I am perſwaded we may very ſafely aſſert, that where-ever the belief and worſhip of a God have been eſtabliſh'd, the expectation of rewards and puniſhments after death hath been ever join'd with them. In this the new-found world agrees with the old, and later time with the remoteſt antiquity.

Sect. II. *Homer* is ſo full of hints and paſſages that ſuppoſe the ſeparate exiſtence of human ſouls, that there can be little doubt of its being the receiv'd opinion of the age he liv'd in. In his *invocation* of the *Muſe*, he diſtinguiſhes between the undaunted ſouls of his heroes ſent to *Hades*, and that part of them which was left to be devour'd by dogs, and birds of prey. *Tully* takes notice of this univerſal agreement of mankind, and the parallel, in this reſpect, between their apprehenſions on this article, and that of the exiſtence of a Deity; arguing, that the conſent of all nations in any point is to be regarded as a law, or dictate, of nature. *That* there are gods (ſaith he) we *naturally* believe; *what* they are, *reaſon* muſt inform us; ſo, *that* ſouls do not ceaſe to exiſt, we are led to believe by the conſent of all nations; in *what ſeats* they reſide, and what ſort of beings they are, is to be learnt from reaſon; the ignorance of which gave riſe

riſe to the fables which were grafted on this belief, and are by wiſe men juſtly deſpis'd. From his manner of expreſſion, it is plain that he thought both theſe principles to be as it were *innate* to the mind; *hæc ſentimus natura duce, nulla ratione, nullaque doctrina* *. Our ſentiments here are deriv'd from pure nature; not from any reaſoning of our own, or inſtruction of others.

Sect. III. And, indeed, before this prevailing belief of a future ſtate can be admitted for a diſtinct and immediate argument of its certainty, it muſt be ſuppos'd, or ſhewn, to be an *anticipation of nature*; or, in other words, it muſt be prov'd that God form'd the mind with a ſtrong biaſs or inclination to the belief of its own immortality, which inclination, as ſoon as the man is capable of thinking about theſe things, immediately exerts it ſelf in the actual belief of a future life, independent of education, and the deſire of living beyond the grave, and antecedently to all reaſoning upon the ſubject. And, provided this be made good, the argument from hence will want nothing to compleat it; for if God, as *the author of nature*, was the immediate author of this belief, he muſt have laid himſelf thereby, as by a kind of promiſe, under an obligation to verify it. If, on the contrary, this belief

* Tuſc. Quæſt. l. 1. ſ. 13, 15, 16.

be

be not founded in a prepoſſeſſion ſtrictly natural, it cannot, in my judgment, paſs for a ſeparate proof: And that there is any ſuch anticipation (tho' it be what I am ſatisfied in) is a thing not eaſy to prove to one that denies it, and will aſſign it to ſome other cauſe. But then, ſuch a one will get little by this conceſſion, ſince the cauſe to be fix'd on muſt either be *tradition*, or the *evidence* of the arguments for a future ſtate, which lie level to all capacities.

Sect. IV. Shall we reſt it on the foot of tradition? the fact I am ready to grant, that there hath been a univerſal and uncontroul'd tradition in this matter. Before we are capable of making this enquiry concerning our future exiſtence; before we could have the leaſt thought of ſuch a ſtate, if we were left entirely to our ſelves, we commonly have this moſt uſeful principle inſtill'd into our minds by our parents, or other perſons who have the care of our education. They do, as it were, draw the curtain, and open the ſcene to our minds. And by this means, the thoughts of another world mingling with our firſt thoughts, and taking full poſſeſſion of us, we are, for the moſt part, as well perſuaded of its reality, as if the notion had been originally and properly ſtamp'd on our minds by the hand of God himſelf, according to the opinion of ſome men. And as we learn this

this important leſſon concerning a future ſtate from our parents, ſo they receiv'd it from theirs; nor, if we trace this matter backward, ſhall we ever come to a generation of men who were the firſt inventors of this notion, but following the hiſtory of antient times, we ſhall be conducted to the firſt parents of our race, who were, moſt probably, *taught of God.*

Sect. V. Any other tradition than this, *ſuppos'd to have been firſt ſet on foot by politicians and lawgivers,* can neither be reconcil'd with the earlieſt accounts of time, nor with the reaſon of the thing. For, when it was begun, how came it to ſpread from one nation to another till it had made a conqueſt of all parts of the earth? Did the ſeveral clans of mankind meet, and conſult together, and at laſt frame a creed by the majority of votes? but who ſhould manage the negotiation, and in what method, and by what ſteps could it be carried on, and perfected? and, as for a tradition deduc'd from the fountains of the human race, whoever acknowledge that, muſt be oblig'd in conſequence of it, to admit the truth of the doctrine which hath been thus deliver'd down from the firſt original of things.

Sect. VI. It may be thought that this tradition is no proof but to thoſe who are acquainted with the *Moſaick* hiſtory of the

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creation. But the contrary may be eaſily ſhewn. Such a tradition there hath been for many ages, at leaſt: and when did it commence? if with the human race, the heads of which are ſuppos'd to have been created by God, the point is decided. If ſince, the difficulty, before mention'd, returns, of conceiving a way in which it became ſo univerſal. Should it be farther ſuggeſted, in order to depretiate the other arguments of a future ſtate, that tradition is the ſole original of this belief, and that reaſon would never have taught men any ſuch thing, the anſwer is ready at hand, that the ſame objection might as well be ſtarted in reference to the belief of a God, which every man firſt receives from education. Whether, and how ſoon, men, ſuppos'd to have been bred up in an utter ignorance of theſe things, would have form'd a notion of them by the exerciſe of their reaſoning faculty, is a queſtion perfectly looſe, and detach'd from the preſent diſpute. Upon the ſame ſuppoſition of perſons not having their minds at all cultivated by education, there are a thouſand other things which they would have no apprehenſion of, the truth and uſefulneſs of which, nevertheleſs, after they have been propos'd to them by others, they are capable of demonſtrating. The validity of the proofs brought for the truth of any propoſition doth

doth not depend on the manner in which we were led firſt to think of it. What we believe firſt through the force of education we may afterwards believe upon the teſtimony of reaſon. And they who know what it is to reaſon right, may be as certain whether they do ſo or no; and, if they have a mind to it, may judge as impartially of the arguments produc'd, as if they had not imbib'd the notion from education. Otherwiſe, we ſhould never be able to rely on the truth of our faculties, and the integrity of our judgment, but in things which contradicted the receiv'd belief; in which we have moſt ground to ſuſpect our being deceiv'd.

Sect. VII. 'Tis farther certain that in caſe this belief had no other baſis but education, ſo that education did not coincide with the natural notions of mens minds, nor was ſupported by any rational arguments for a future ſtate, we ſhould not find it ſo impoſſible to throw off this belief, and much leſs would the underſtanding approve it, and acquieſce in it, as it now does. And for ought I know, the general agreement of mankind in the belief of another life beſides this, when thus employ'd to back and ſecond other arguments, will be of as much uſe as if made a diſtinct evidence, by being reſolv'd into an *anticipation of nature*, becauſe, as ſuch,

ſuch, it cannot lend the ſame aſſiſtance to the reſt.

Sect. VIII. Some will not allow this univerſal belief to proceed immediately from *nature*. We will ſuppoſe it does not, but from *tradition*. Yet as this tradition could not have grown univerſal, if there had been a time when the nations of the earth were without all belief of a future ſtate, and was, therefore, *from the beginning*, and therefore probably ſet on foot by the order of God himſelf; ſo, let it begin *when*, and ſpread *how*, you pleaſe, yet it could not have kept its ground, and endur'd in the ſtrength and vigor it hath done, not only gaining the *affections of the heart* (as every principle of education, *true* or *falſe*, is apt to do) but the *approbation of the underſtanding*, if it had not been countenanc'd and enforc'd by arguments from reaſon, of ſo great plainneſs and evidence, that all mankind have been ſenſible of the force of them.

Sect. IX. Others will have this propoſition, that there are future rewards and puniſhments, to be an *innate principle*; either ſtrictly ſuch, being imprinted on the mind, or leſs properly, as nature is fram'd with a diſpoſition to fall in with it upon the firſt propoſal; and that this impreſſion of nature will *fully* account for the univerſality of this belief. Let it be ſo. But then the

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other arguments for a future ſtate will be left to ſtand more upon their own legs, without the additional ſtrength they would otherwiſe receive from this conſideration, that they have, in fact, appear'd ſo evident to mankind, as to obtain the aſſent of all people, of every climate, character, and degree of underſtanding, and to be the chief ground of the univerſality and conſtancy of this traditional belief.

Sect. X. If there be a third ſort, who join *nature* and *tradition*, but will leave nothing to the force of the arguments from reaſon, pretending they have no weight at all in them; they are certainly in the wrong, becauſe, notwithſtanding this conſpiring influence of nature and tradition, we are not ſo blinded and prejudic'd by them, but we are able to judge whether an argument be concluſive, or no; and finding, after the moſt exact ſcrutiny, that there are many ſuch arguments, which reflect a light upon one another, we have reaſon to think that theſe arguments likewiſe have contributed their part to the univerſality of this belief of a future ſtate, and to *fix it* deeper in the minds of men.

CHAP. VII.

Future Rewards *diſcoverable from the Light of Reaſon, notwithſtanding the* Imperfection of human Virtue.

Sect. I. THE author of a late diſcourſe concerning *the impoſſibility of proving a future ſtate by the light of nature*, before mention'd, fancies he hath at once diſabled all the arguments for another life, in which a viſible diſtinction ſhall be made between the virtuous and vicious part of mankind, by this ſhort reply, that theſe arguments for future rewards "*will not hold* "*good as to ſuch creatures as men now are,* "*who have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory* "*of God; but only when they concern crea-* "*tures that are innocent and perfectly holy.*" Having granted the fact on which this *author* builds his reaſoning, that *there is no man who liveth and ſinneth not*; I will take the liberty to ſay, that notwithſtanding this degeneracy of human nature, the evidence for a future ſtate of rewards, where every man, that is not inexcuſably wanting to himſelf, ſhall enjoy a happineſs ſuitable to the nature which God hath given him, and correſpondent to the degree of his ſincere, though imperfect goodneſs, appears to me to ſubſiſt, not at all, or not conſiderably, dimi-

diminiſh'd in its force. My reaſon is, that a *ſtate of innocence* not being, and never having been, in our power, the wiſdom and goodneſs of God will not allow us to ſuppoſe, he would make this, which is *morally impoſſible*, the condition of his favour and acceptance.

Sect. II. I believe, none who hold the opinion of *immediate creation* will deny the ſoul to be pure and upright when firſt put into the body; but then, this ſoul, though created with an entire rectitude in all its powers, is from its firſt entrance into the body, or rather into the world, beſieg'd by the objects of ſenſe, which ſooth and taint the imagination, excite and engage the paſſions, and, by the help of theſe ſeducers, poſſeſs the ſoul with early and ſtrong prejudices in favour of a ſenſual and worldly felicity. A vicious, or at beſt, defective, education, prevailing errors, and the numerous examples of vice, conſpire to ſpread and encreaſe the evil; inſomuch that, by the time *reaſon* is capable of making any ſtand againſt *nature*, it finds the ſoul more than half-conquer'd by thoſe violent inclinations, which are continually tempting, and, unleſs firmly reſiſted, hurrying it into the paths of ſin. Theſe inclinations, indeed, are not ſo ſtrong as to be abſolutely ungovernable; but then, on the other hand, they are too ſtrong to be en-

tirely expell'd, or kept from making occaſional incurſions on our innocence. All this is foreſeen by our *Creator*, who yet judges fit to ſend the ſoul into the body: I aſk, *With what view?* Is it with a deſign of advancing it to a better ſtate, after its time of trial is ended; but on *this condition only*, that it preſerve it ſelf perfectly ſound and healthy in the midſt of contagion, and, whilſt it walks in ſlippery places, never actually ſlides? But this is ſuch a deſign as God knows *will* never ſucceed, ſo much as in a ſingle inſtance; we may juſtly ſay, *cannot*; and is therefore unworthy the majeſty of the ſupreme Being to propoſe. This ſuppoſition not being defenſible, Will it be ſaid, that the deſign of God in this act of his providence was, that the ſoul might have an opportunity to make it ſelf miſerable hereafter, but not the leaſt chance for a ſtate of happineſs? A moſt glorious and amiable ſcheme of divine providence towards the children of men! which I leave thoſe that can to reconcile, I do not ſay with infinite goodneſs, but with any goodneſs at all. From hence I infer, that the choice before us, is not *annihilation* or *miſery*; but either all men have *the ſame* dark and gloomy proſpect of *annihilation*, or mankind have *different* proſpects of *happineſs* or *miſery*, as virtue or vice is their predominant character.

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Sect. III. Againſt the *annihilation* of *all men*, without diſtinction, reaſon loudly reclaims, as a thing utterly inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of God to continue a race of creatures, only to act the ſame follies over again, one generation after another; or to make the ſame fruitleſs eſſays towards the attainment of virtue and felicity, with impatient deſires after them, and vaſt and excellent capacities for them, but *deſires* that ſhall never be *accompliſh'd*, *capacities* that ſhall never be *filled*. Much more doth reaſon declare againſt this hypotheſis as incompatible with the ſame Wiſdom, conſider'd in its governing character. For though *juſtice* doth not oblige the Creator and Governor of the world to beſtow *any* rewards which he hath not *promis'd* (no not on his innocent creatures) much leſs *eternal* ones; yet ſurely *wiſdom* (ſome would ſay *juſtice*, but I think, not ſo properly) is concern'd to ſee that in the diſtribution of the advantages and diſadvantages of being, the lovers of virtue do not, upon the whole, fare worſe than its enemies; or the *moſt eminent* among the virtuous meet with *leaſt* encouragement. But now, whether there be any ſuch proportion and adjuſtment of rewards, as this, in the preſent life, any one may ſatisfy himſelf on the leaſt obſervation. This, I take it, makes the argument unanſwerable againſt the annihilation of *all*, good and bad.

Sect. IV. But when 'tis farther added, that God is a Being of infinite *goodneſs*; reaſon is ſtill more poſitive that he cannot proceed with his creatures after this manner, ſaying, *Return ye children of men* to your firſt nothing, thoſe of you whoſe aim is to pleaſe me, as well as others. Would a good God place millions of innocent ſouls in ſuch circumſtances, that they can never reaſonably hope to be happy, merely becauſe they do not atchieve impoſſibilities; when, in more favourable circumſtances, where the balance betwixt virtue and vice hung only *equal* till reaſon came to be capable of making a free choice, theſe very ſouls might have preſerv'd their innocence? This proves that if God had not judg'd it proper to make his creatures happy on any other terms than thoſe of perfect obedience, and perſevering innocence, his goodneſs is ſuch, that he would have put them in an agreeable ſituation for this purpoſe, that happineſs might not be an impoſſible acquiſition.

Sect. V. I cannot forbear obſerving, in this place, the inconſiſtency of this gentleman's opinion, with his own way of reaſoning. His *opinion* (as far as I can gather it from the general title of the *diſcourſe*, and ſeveral paſſages in it) is this, that *reaſon, without revelation, does not lead men to believe there is any future ſtate at all; the good and bad alike, after death, paſſing into a ſtate*

ſtate of non-exiſtence, for any thing we can prove from the light of nature to the contrary. His *reaſon* why future rewards are not to be expected by *any* men, is that *all have ſinned.* Here I have to remark, that if this reaſon againſt a future ſtate of *rewards* be good, it evidently *proves*, without the light of revelation, a future ſtate of *puniſhment.* It muſt be the *holineſs* of God, or his diſpleaſure againſt ſin, if any thing, that makes it reaſonable to think he will annihilate the moſt virtuous ſouls, becauſe they are not perfectly innocent. But from the ſame holineſs we may conclude much more ſtrongly for the wicked's being puniſh'd in an after life; ſince the calamities of *this* of which they have many times the leaſt ſhare, are no indication at all of the peculiar diſpleaſure of God againſt them. Or, we may argue backward, that the annihilation of the moſt profligate ſinners (proſperous, it may be, to the laſt) being ſuppos'd, God's paſſing over all their provocations ſo ſlightly, may juſtly encourage the humble confidence of ſincere ſouls, that their unallow'd failings, and ſins which they have forſaken, ſhall not be imputed to them, ſo far as to exclude them from all advantage by their virtue after death.

Sect. VI. I muſt beg leave for another remark on *two paſſages* of this *author*; which lie ſo near together, that I am

ſurpriz'd they did not appear ſhocking to himſelf. One of them is; "I cannot "perceive how this argument (*viz.* from "*man's being plainly in his nature an ac-* "*countable creature, and capable of being* "*judg'd)* can prove that the *worſt* of men "ſhall be puniſh'd in a future ſtate, *p.* 265." The word *worſt* is, in his own book, printed in a different character, which I the rather take notice of, becauſe it helps to make the boldneſs of the expreſſion more remarkable, and the abſurdity of the notion more glaring. The other paſſage is in the ſame page; "that there ſhall be a day of judg-"ment at the end of the world, wherein "the Lord Jeſus ſhall judge all mankind, "and ſentence all that have ſincerely be-"liev'd in, and obey'd him, to eternal life "and happineſs in the new *Jeruſalem*, and "*(obſerve)* condemn the deſpiſers of his "perſon and grace, to everlaſting miſery "and torments, is as certain to me from the "expreſs revelation of the goſpel, as any "truth whatſoever." The expreſſion of being *accountable*, plainly implies that mankind are dependent upon God, and oblig'd to him, and capable of knowing this, and of acting agreeably (eſpecially, being join'd with the words, *capable* of being judg'd) and that, therefore, if they do not act thus ſuitably to their nature and obligations, but, inſtead of this, fly in the face of their ſove-

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reign and benefactor, which, ſurely, is done by the *worſt* of men; they muſt expect to give an account of their behaviour, and, without repentance, to be puniſh'd for it in a *future ſtate*. Whoever ſays, *no*; but that an *eternal ſleep*, to which they are condemned, in company with the *beſt* of men, who have liv'd without a revelation, may be a ſufficient puniſhment; muſt look upon the guilt of ſuch a conduct, which yet makes them the *worſt* of men, as very ſmall and inconſiderable. And when the guilt of the *worſt* of men, acting in defiance of the *light of nature*, and all the diſcoveries of divine goodneſs in *creation* and *providence*, perhaps, to them ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing, is ſo ſmall and trivial; how comes the guilt of all who live under the *goſpel*, and do not come up to the terms of it, to ſwell to that terrible ſize as to *deſerve* their being *condemn'd to everlaſting miſery and torments? deſerve* this, I ſay; for, I ſuppoſe, they will not be condemn'd to them without deſerving to be ſo. May we not conceive, that among the deſpiſers of the perſon and grace of Jeſus Chriſt (in which number, I take it for granted, he comprehends all wicked impenitent Chriſtians, who neglect that great ſalvation which is offer'd to them) there may be ſome, whoſe caſe is attended with ſuch alleviating circumſtances, that their guilt does not, upon the whole, exceed

that

that of the *worſt* of men under the *diſpenſation of nature?* And the guilt being (we will only ſay) equal, muſt *one* man have nothing worſe to apprehend than *annihilation*, while for *another* there remaineth a *certain fearful expectation of judgment*, and miſery without end? I doubt, we muſt then ſay, that the ſeverity of the *goſpel-diſpenſation* is not leſs than its goodneſs. To proceed;

Sect. VII. I deſire to be inform'd, what can induce a wiſe and good God to confer happineſs on his creatures, but their being qualified for it, according to the ſtate and condition aſſigned them? and wherein does this qualification for happineſs conſiſt, but in true virtue? Or what is virtue but the love of God and our duty, and a prevailing determination of the will to pleaſe the one, and perform the other? and to perform it for this very reaſon, that we ſhall herein pleaſe God? Now if this love of God, and univerſal goodneſs, this determination of the will to what is juſt and reaſonable, may be ſtronger in a Being, that through the violence, the ſurprize, or importunity of temptation, and the imperfect light by which he is guided, is ſometimes carried aſide from the rule preſcrib'd him, than in another, who, meeting with little or no oppoſition in his own frame, or the world about him, and bleſt with clearer diſcoveries of the divine will, goes on in a ſtrait courſe;

courſe; I ſay, if this may be ſuppos'd, (as I don't ſee why it may not) it will follow that the former, in reſpect of the temper and habit of his mind, is, to ſay the leaſt, as well qualified for the enjoyment of happineſs as the latter; and, if qualified, or prepar'd, for it, what ſhould hinder his enjoying it? It may be anſwer'd; why, thoſe ſins and tranſgreſſions he is guilty of, for which his repentance is no proper ſatisfaction. Very true; it is not; yet ſince it is the beſt the creature hath to offer, and the errors he is drawn into thro' weakneſs, and in his unguarded moments, do not deſtroy the habits of virtue, it may be concluded that repentance, in ſuch caſes at leaſt, ſhall be accepted; if not for its own ſake, and in a way of abſolute goodneſs in God, yet upon ſome conſideration or other known to God, and by him judg'd ſufficient to vindicate the honour of his government.

Sect. VIII. This *reaſoning* is very much favour'd by ſeveral *indications*, which we meet with in our ſelves, and in the diſpenſations of providence, of the kind and favourable thoughts of God towards us; even *thoughts of peace, and not of evil.* In our ſelves we find *a ſenſe of good and evil*, which, becauſe no man is without it, we juſtly conclude to have been created in us by God himſelf; and is therefore call'd *natural*

tural Conſcience. The *Heathens* have ſpoken of conſcience as that which makes a man happy, or miſerable, and deſcrib'd its different workings in the moſt lively characters; as perſons not unacquainted with the thing they diſcours'd of. And what is the language of thoſe hopes and joys which are the Offspring of a *good conſcience?* for I am now conſidering theſe only, and not the terrors and anxieties of an *evil one.* Is it not the ſame as that of God to *Cain, If thou doſt well ſhalt thou not be accepted?* When conſcience abſolves, is it not authoritatively? When it ſpeaks peace, is it not in the name of God? Is not this preſent ſatisfaction an earneſt of ſome other, and greater reward? There is a pleaſure attends every good action; and, much more, a courſe of ſuch actions; when virtue and goodneſs are become *habitual,* they produce an unſpeakable calm in the ſoul, and eſtabliſh it againſt all the aſſaults of outward evils. Should it be ſuggeſted, that *theſe men have their reward:* My anſwer is, that if it be their only reward, and in the next life they are to be miſerable notwithſtanding all this appearance of a reconciliation between God and them; the pleaſures of conſcience which they at preſent feel will prove to be deceitful, and have the effect, which other pleaſing deceptions have, to make them the more unhappy afterwards;

better

better not have known theſe pleaſures, ſince they only enſnare them into falſe and deluſive hopes, and give the greater ſting to their future miſery, by its coming unexpected.

Sect. IX. But the teſtimony of a good conſcience, and the inward confidence and rejoicing ariſing from it, prove more than this bare *negative*, that *future miſery is not the unavoidable portion of mankind who are without a revelation*; we are from hence authoriz'd to conclude that their Maker hath deſign'd them for a ſtate of happineſs, to which they ſhall certainly attain, if they do not diſpleaſe, and counter-act, *the author of their beings.* The pleaſures of a mind, conſcious to its own integrity, are the bloſſoms of this happineſs, and as plainly promiſe it, as the bloſſoms in ſpring do the fruits of the ſummer. Sincerity gives a man great boldneſs and aſſurance, and prompts him to look forward to a time when this private witneſs in his own boſom ſhall be ratified with the approbation of his ſupreme Judge, which he will declare by ſome viſible and determinate marks of his favour. Otherwiſe, I cannot ſee what occaſion there is for ſo much joy in reflecting on a life of virtue; unleſs it be for the influence which ſuch a life hath upon our preſent happineſs: But as this happineſs is inconſiderable, and the influence of virtue upon

upon it is ſtill leſs, the joy deriv'd from hence would be next to none.

Sect. X. Another thing which cannot have eſcap'd the obſervation of thoſe who have any knowledge of human nature, is the *inclination to hope* which in the generality of mankind is exceeding ſtrong and remarkable. The ſtructure of their hopes is no ſooner thrown to the ground, but they build it up again, as high and towering as ever; their hopes ſubſiſt amidſt diſappointments, and grow out of miſery it ſelf. And what is it that theſe hopes, being interpreted, teach us? plainly this; that we are yet in a mutable ſtate; that we may become happy, if we do not make our ſelves miſerable; that our caſe is not hopeleſs, becauſe then we our ſelves ſhould be the ſame. The *author of nature* intended that thou ſhouldſt hope; elſe, he would not have fram'd thy nature as he hath done; he farther intended, that thou ſhouldſt put thy hope and truſt in him, becauſe, on the contrary ſuppoſition, he would not have given thee ſuch a diſpoſition to hope in general. Can it be thought that God would ſo twiſt the paſſion of hope with the human heart, that it cannot eaſily be tore from thence, and lay us under a neceſſity of fixing our hope on ſome object or other, and at the ſame time forbid us all hope of his favour, of the pardon of our ſins, and final

final happineſs? I muſt own, this to me appears altogether incredible. The *hope of happineſs* is *invincible*, therefore *natural*; but *experience* ſhews, that the hope of happineſs *in* and *from* this world, is the greateſt folly: from this ſeeming contradiction there is no getting clear, but by ſuppoſing *a ſtate of happineſs beyond death*, to the purſuit and hope of which we are conducted by our diſappointments themſelves. The hope of an *earthly felicity* is only a miſapplication of the *natural paſſion*, for want of laying *that* and our *experience* together, and then reaſoning upon them. As another abuſe of the natural paſſion would be, to hope for the happineſs of the future world, without taking the method which *reaſon* preſcribes for obtaining it. *Nature* bids us hope; without all doubt, therefore, there is ſufficient ground for hope; but not, whether we act *right* or *wrong*. Being reaſonable and free agents, ſomething is expected from us by way of qualification for the happineſs we hope for. And what that is, every man's *reaſon*, where there is no *revelation*, muſt inform him; and therefore, if men conſult not with *reaſon* in this matter, and much more if they knowingly contradict it, their hopes of happineſs hereafter, without changing the courſe of life they are in, muſt be very unreaſonable.

Sect.

Sect. XI. *The goodneſs of God to mankind in the diſpenſations of his providence* brings us directly to the ſame concluſion. The goodneſs of God's *Providence*, proclaims the goodneſs of his *nature*; and from the goodneſs of his nature we may be confident, that he is not *kind to all*, only that his bleſſings may be ſnares to them; for this would not be *goodneſs*, but ſomething worſe than *ſeverity*; or to ſignify, that this is the utmoſt that any of them have to expect from him. When he ſhowers down his favours on a ſinful world, guides the ſeaſons, bleſſes the earth with encreaſe, makes the good in moſt mens lives to preponderate the evil, God does as it were addreſs himſelf to the children of men, and ſay, You ſee here, I am not averſe to a reconciliation; you have by your evil works deſerv'd that I ſhould paſs ſentence upon you, and I have done it ſo far as to determin that *if you repent not, you ſhall periſh*; but I have not yet executed the ſentence; I am not willing to execute it; I on purpoſe ſuſpend the execution, that you may have time to turn unto me, and *by my goodneſs be led to repentance.* This is *the voice of God in his providence*, as we are directed to underſtand it by the *Scripture* it ſelf. And now, ſuppoſing that men do repent, and return to a better mind, what will be the conſequence? only, that God will continue,

tinue, and enlarge his temporal favours to them? This cannot be the deſign; ſince there is no ſuch connexion between *repentance* and *worldly proſperity*, as between the *means* and the *end*. There are thoſe who grow worſe for the favours of heaven, and yet enjoy them ſtill; others are brought to repentance and amendment of life, either by afflictions, or mercies; but have not their afflictions hereupon remov'd, or their proſperity eſtabliſh'd, and encreas'd. Wherefore; it is not more certain, that the manifeſtations of God's goodneſs in his providential dealings with the children of men are intended to lead them to repentance; than it is, that their repentance, attended with a ſuitable life, will prepare them for better rewards, and ſuch as are more agreeable to the nature of moral goodneſs, than any which this world affords.

CHAP. VIII.

Revelation *neither affirms, or ſuppoſes, any thing which* enervates, *much leſs, which* quite deſtroys *the Arguments for future recompences from the* light of Nature.

Sect. I. AT the ſame time that I contend for the certainty of a future ſtate on the *principles of reaſon*, being well perſwaded of the truth of the *chriſtian revelation*, I cannot ſuppoſe that this revelation does really, in any part of it, contradict the notion I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh. And that it does not, will, I preſume, be manifeſt when the following obſervations are duly conſider'd, by the help of which the difficulties and objections alledg'd from ſcripture will admit of an eaſie anſwer.

Sect. II. *Obſ.* 1. *Reaſon cannot plainly dictate one thing to thoſe who have no other rule to go by, and revelation the direct contrary, concerning the ſame perſons, to others.* Now this one thing, which reaſon leads all thoſe to believe who are under no other guidance but hers, is a ſtate of recompences after Death. And reaſon aſſuring them of this, which is the only inſtructor they have, it either teacheth them nothing but truth, or they labour under an *invincible*

cible error. That the latter cannot be ſuppos'd without impeaching the veracity and goodneſs of God, was ſhewn before; and therefore the former muſt be admitted. And what is once true muſt be ſo for ever. No ſupervening revelation can alter it. *Revelation* cannot tell the *Chriſtian* that the *Heathens* had no grounds to believe a future ſtate; when the *ſame Heathens* were told by *their own reaſon*, that they had. They who at once enjoy both reaſon and revelation, are, by the advice of reaſon it ſelf, oblig'd to put themſelves under the conduct of revelation as the *ſurer guide*; and therefore, on the teſtimony of revelation, may believe ſome things to be true or falſe, contrary to what they appear to reaſon, judging by her own light and principles; provided reaſon be more certain of the truth and meaning of the revelation than it is of the truth or falſhood of the things in queſtion. But what is this to men who have only reaſon afforded them, and are to be determin'd by that, or by nothing? They muſt follow their only guide, and as long as they do ſo, cannot go wrong. If the *heathen world* might be led wrong by *reaſon*, why not the *chriſtian world* by *revelation?* it being no more inconſiſtent with the perfections of God to deceive us one way than another.

Sect. III. But may not revelation ſhew that *not* to be reaſon which had long been taken for ſuch? undoubtedly it may; and hath in fact done it, in regard of the many errors and ſuperſtitions of the *pagan religion*. But then, this is not done by barely *aſſerting* the Heathens to have gone aſtray, but by *enlightning our minds* after ſuch a manner with the knowledge of the truth that we clearly *diſcern* their miſtakes, and that theſe miſtakes were of ſuch a nature that they could not have fallen into them *at firſt*, nor have *afterwards* continued in them, if they had not moſt inexcuſably neglected the uſe of *their own reaſon*. They ſtifled this divine ſpark, and ſet up imagination in the room of it; and 'tis no wonder that, confounding imagination with reaſon, they miſtook imaginary Deities for the true God. Thus it is in reference to thoſe things which had their original from reaſon and wiſdom *falſely ſo call'd*; the truth being ſet before us in its native light, we are convinc'd of the abſurdity of theſe things, and of their having had their birth from the corruption of the human underſtanding, and heart. As to the notion of a future ſtate, it is much otherwiſe. This hath prevail'd among all mankind, and among them moſt, who have liv'd, and reaſon'd beſt. And not only the thing it ſelf is confirm'd by revelation; but the *rational*

tional proofs of it, ſince the underſtandings of men were purified and enlarg'd by this ſupernatural light, have been more clearly ſtated, and ſtrongly defended, than they ever were before; and we perceive that the belief of future recompences, according to mens real characters, which obtain'd among the heathens, was as agreeable to reaſon, as many other things, believ'd by them, were contrary to it; which is next to demonſtration, that it is not an empty unreal image of reaſon, but the very thing it ſelf, that men follow in entertaining the belief of a life to come.

Sect. IV. *Obſ.* 2. *Reveal'd religion cannot teach any ſuch doctrines as are ſubverſive of natural; becauſe this latter is the foundation which the former ſtands upon.* But the doctrine of no-evidence for a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments does immediately overthrow all natural religion, and cannot therefore be a doctrine of revelation. No future ſtate, no obligations to the duties of natural religion, or none that will be regarded. Let us therefore ſuppoſe there had been no religion of any kind in the world for ſome thouſands of years, excepting in one little corner of it, no worſhip of the Deity, no expectations from him, and that *Jeſus Chriſt* at his coming into the world had found it in this condition; What would have been the reception of a perſon who

pretended to come from heaven in order to inſtruct men in the way thither? And how would they have reaſon'd upon this extraordinary phœnomenon? Would they not have thought it very ſtrange that the conduct of providence towards creatures of the ſame ſpecies ſhould be ſo exceeding different and unequal, that one part of it ſhould die like the *beaſts*, another partake of immortality with *ſuperior beings?* that the governor of the univerſe ſhould have ſhewn ſuch a diſregard of mankind for many ages, how many they knew not, as to leave them without all effectual motives to virtue and religion, making no diſtinction between them in this life, according to their different behaviour, nor giving them any good reaſon to think he would ever do it in another; and at laſt ſend *his own ſon* to reveal his will to them under the ſanction of eternal rewards and puniſhments? this is a ſtrange leap, they might have ſaid, from *no religion*, to one *ſo pure, and ſtrict, and ſublime!* from *no future ſtate*, to one that is *everlaſting!* we ſhould have had ſome hints, at leaſt, of this matter from our own reaſon; natural religion ſhould have been our *Schoolmaſter* to lead us to a more perfect diſpenſation; and by obſcurer ideas, and fainter hopes, we ſhould have been prepar'd for thoſe glorious diſcoveries, which, in our preſent circumſtances,

ſtances, do quite overwhelm us, and are too ſurprizing to be credible.

Sect. V. It is true that in fact, the ſtate of the world was not as I have ſuppos'd it: The obligations to virtue and religion have been univerſally acknowledg'd; but the reaſon of that hath been, becauſe the recompences of another life have been univerſally believ'd; and, by that means, have had ſome influence on the hopes and fears of mankind. But now if theſe hopes and fears were without all foundation in reaſon, there is no abſurdity in arguing upon the ſuppoſition of mens having been without them, and without that ſenſe of religion which is built upon them. Nay, and tho' there was ſuch a thing as *natural religion*, (overgrown, indeed, with ſuperſtition) and a foundation for it in the hopes and fears of mankind, before the *chriſtian religion* appear'd, yet it muſt have been an unſurmountable prejudice againſt the new religion, if, according to the account which that gave of things, (*viz.* that the hopes and fears of another life, among men deſtitute of revelation, were entirely imaginary) religion had till then reſted upon nothing but a falſe imagination; the human race having been abandon'd to utter deſtruction for ſome thouſands of years, before a ſcene of immortality was open'd to them. Our anceſtors then, if you the preachers of the

goſpel are to be believ'd, whether they were men of probity and religion, or infamous for their vices, were under a like neceſſity of dying, body and ſoul, for ever, and ſo had really no encouragement to devote themſelves to a life of religion; while we, who have the ſame nature they had, and have deriv'd it from them, muſt, whether we will or no, be immortal, tho', whether it ſhall be in happineſs or miſery, is left to our own choice. This objection againſt the goſpel muſt have been very obvious, if, as ſome men pretend, it cut off the whole heathen world, good and bad alike, from all relation to any other life beſides this; and that no ſuch objection was ever offer'd, is a very ſtrong preſumption that the goſpel was not apprehended to give any handle for it, by the firſt converts to it, who were better capable of judging, than we can be, whether it did ſo or no.

Sect. VI. *Obſ.* 3. *The death threaten'd to* Adam, *was only the death of the body; not of the whole man, body, and ſoul.* The *threatning*, which was intended to prevent the breach of the law, is beſt explain'd by the *ſentence*, after the law was broken, and the ſentence by the *execution*. *In the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die*, is the threatning; purſuant to which, the ſentence is pronounc'd on fallen man, *Gen.* iii. 19. *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou*

thou return. Of the execution of which ſentence we have an account, *Gen.* v. 5. *All the days that* Adam *liv'd were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.* He died, and therein ſuffer'd the puniſhment which the law threaten'd, and his judge had ſolemnly condemn'd him to. So far then, we have no reaſon to think that any other death is meant than the death of the body; ſince no other is mention'd either in the ſentence or the execution. And if it be farther added, that *Moſes*, who wrote *the hiſtory of the fall*, cannot be ſuppos'd to have intended any thing elſe by the word *death*, than the deſtruction or end of this bodily life; nor the *Jews*, for whoſe uſe he immediately wrote it, to have underſtood him otherwiſe, it will make it highly probable that corporeal death, and no other, was threaten'd. Now the only, or at leaſt, the moſt direct way to know *Moſes*'s meaning in this expreſſion, and the conſtruction which his readers at that time would put upon it, is to conſider how it is taken in other places of the ſame writer; for if we meet with the ſame phraſe, and in the ſame writer, and never ſignifying any thing elſe than the death of the body; for what reaſon ſhould we imagine it to ſignify any other in the firſt threatning, when there is not the leaſt intimation of it in the whole account of that tranſaction? *Gen.* xxvi. 11. *And* Abimelech

melech *charged his people, ſaying, He that toucheth this man, or his wife, ſhall ſurely be put to death*; where the words in the original are exactly the ſame, *dying he ſhall die*, that is, he ſhall ſurely die for it. And ſo *Exod.* xxi. 12, 15, 16, and 17. It is appointed by the law, that whoſoever was guilty of the crimes there mention'd, ſhould *ſurely die.* Here again the ſame phraſe is us'd: as likewiſe, *Levit.* xx. 2, and 9, and ſeveral other verſes. And in all theſe places denotes that death which was to be inflicted by the hand of the magiſtrate, *who could only kill the body*, on ſuch ſort of malefactors. The concluſion from hence is, that when man is told that he ſhall die, if he eat of the forbidden fruit, we are to underſtand death in the uſual ſenſe of that word; according to which, neither the entire extinction of the ſoul, nor its everlaſting life in miſery, is meant; but the period of that life which *man* enjoys *as man*, that is, as a Being compounded of ſoul and body, the latter of which is, by death, reſolv'd into its original duſt, while the former, on its divorce from its partner, is tranſmitted into a ſeparate ſtate of exiſtence. This is the ordinary notion of death; the notion that hath been entertain'd of it by all mankind, in all ages; what the *Jewiſh nation* particularly underſtood by death in *Moſes* his time, and conſequently is the true

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and full notion of that death which is annexed by way of penalty to the *firſt law.*

Sect. VII. That which ſeems to put this matter out of all doubt, is the *peremptorineſs* of the threatning. *Thou ſhalt ſurely die*; as ſurely die as thou art now living; nothing can ſave thy life when once it is forfeited; nothing ſhall be accepted in lieu of it; there ſhall be no ſuch pardon of thy ſin as will deliver thee from the neceſſity of ſeeing death and corruption; no releaſe and diſcharge; no; but thou ſhalt ſurely die; I engage the honour of my word for it; and ſooner ſhall heaven and earth paſs away than the leaſt tittle of that ſhall fail. This argument is deciſive; *no more was intended in the threatning than was actually inflicted*; for, in that caſe the threatning would have only ſignified what the *deſert* of ſin would be; which man would have known without the addition of a threatning; not what would be the *certain event*, and ſo would not appear to be very *neceſſary*; which we may not ſay, without reflecting on the wiſdom of God. Where is the wiſdom of doing what is unneceſſary, that is, what might as well be let alone? Or, where was the neceſſity of threatning death, if that threatning, after all, might be ſet aſide? It muſt, at leaſt, be ſaid that God would have *Adam* think that there would be no poſſibility of eſcaping death, if he ventur'd to tranſgreſs; and if this

this was the intention of God, that man ſhould expect the certain accompliſhment of the threatning, then God muſt have abſolutely decreed to accompliſh it; the making uſe of falſe hopes and fears in the government of his reaſonable creatures being a thing utterly unworthy of the ſupreme Being.

Sect. VIII. It follows, that the threatning was executed upon our firſt parents; and, if it extended beyond their perſons, ſo as to involve their poſterity in its meaning, is fulfill'd in them likewiſe, on good and bad, *Chriſtians*, and *Heathens*, indifferently. All, without exception, die, with regard to the body; and they all *die in* Adam, or upon the account of their relation to him; and, ſhould any thing more than this be meant in the firſt threatning, *Adam* and his deſcendents muſt be ſuppos'd to ſuffer it. This ſhews that *eternal miſery* could not be deſign'd by death, becauſe, were death, in this notion of it, *to paſs upon all men*, there could be no room for the redemption of any. Nor the *extinction of the entire Being*, unleſs we will ſay, that all men paſs into a ſtate of non-exiſtence at death, from which God redeems ſuch of them, and upon ſuch terms and conditions, as he pleaſes.

Sect. IX. Perhaps, I needed not have taken any pains to prove this; with regard to many of thoſe whoſe notion this is, that

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the death of the whole man was threaten'd to the firſt ſin; ſince they ſeem to allow that death, in this ſenſe of the word, was the actual conſequence of *the fall*; all mankind, without diſtinction, being *totally*, though not *finally*, and *everlaſtingly*, depriv'd of their *being* by death. All men die, after the ſame manner as it was threaten'd *Adam* ſhould do, and ſhall return to life again at the laſt day. This ſecond life is procur'd for them by Chriſt, to the intent, that *as in* Adam *all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhould all be made alive.* But then, for want of that perfect righteouſneſs, which alone confers a title to immortality, they muſt have died a ſecond time for their own ſins, as they did the firſt for the ſin of *Adam*, if God, out of his mercy to mankind, had not propos'd to the children of men, that as many of them as would believe Jeſus his ſon to be the Meſſiah, and receive him for their king and ruler, ſhould have all their paſt ſins and diſobedience forgiven them, and their faith imputed to them for righteouſneſs, and thereby be capable of eternal life. This is Mr. *Locke*'s * ſcheme in his *reaſonableneſs of chriſtianity*, as far as I can gather it from his expreſſions, and from the general drift of that diſcourſe. According to this ſcheme, the life of man is wholly extinguiſh'd by death, rekindled again at the re-

* Vid. *Works in Fol. Vol.* II. p. 519.

ſurrection,

ſurrection, and then loſt, *a ſecond time for ever*, by all thoſe who do not believe and obey the goſpel.

Sect. X. Taking the truth of this opinion for granted; what Mr. *H——tt* affirms cannot be diſputed, that the ſcripture builds upon this ſuppoſition, *no reſurrection, no future ſtate* †. But then, the *Heathens* who had no ſuch notion of death, as a *total privation of their Being*, could not ſee the connection betwixt theſe two; and therefore, though they were without the hope of *a reſurrection*, had no good reaſon to doubt of a *future ſtate*. Nor, in truth, is there any ſuch connection taught in *ſcripture*, as this which is here pretended, between the reſurrection of the body, and a future ſtate; the *diſtinct nature* of the ſoul, and its *ſeparate exiſtence*, being plainly deliver'd in the ſacred writings, as ſhall be ſhewn under the next obſervation. And if the *whole man* doth not *die*, the *whole man* cannot need a *reſurrection*.

Sect. XI. And, indeed, if we ſtrictly examine the notion of the *utter extinction* of the Being, and its *reproduction* after a certain interval of time, it will appear highly abſurd to reaſon; for, after it hath once ceaſed to exiſt, the ſame *individual*, thinking, *Being* can never exiſt more. A new one may be produc'd exactly like the for-

† Page 324.

mer,

mer, and ſo may a *thouſand* more; but that will not make them all to be the ſame Being; as it would do, for the ſame reaſon as any one of them may be the ſame with *that* which had an end put to its exiſtence, ſome time ago; whether a longer, or a ſhorter, makes no difference. After there hath been a gap, or ſeparating ſpace of time, nothing can poſſibly unite the Being exiſting before, and that which exiſts after, into *one.* And this alone, to thoſe who believe a reſurrection, may be inſtead of a thouſand arguments of the ſoul's not dying with the body; becauſe in that caſe the reſurrection would not be barely *refitting up the body*, that it might be united to *the ſame conſcious principle*, with which it was in union before (and which had never for a moment ceas'd to exiſt, and ſo might have a title to be rewarded or puniſh'd, for what was done in a former body) but *producing another conſcious principle*; new as to its very *ſubſtance*, if the ſoul be *immaterial*, and *annihilated*, or, at leaſt, as to *the principle of life and conſciouſneſs*, if it be *matter*; which would conſtitute it a *diſtinct individual agent*, having no intereſt in the good or bad conduct of that other; though, perhaps, it reſembles it as nearly as one Being can another. The reaſoning of *Lucretius* * here would be juſt enough;

* Lib. 3.

Nec

Nec ſi materiam noſtram conlegerit ætas, &c.

that if time ſhould gather together our materials after death, and, after they were reduc'd into the ſame ſituation, life ſhould be ſuperadded, yet would not that ſignify any thing to us; any more than it does, what Beings had been compos'd of the ſame ſtuff before we were born. This by the way.

Sect. XII. This notion then, *viz. That the Death threaten'd to* Adam *was utter privation of Being*, appearing to be a miſtake; they who have been led by it into the ſame way of thinking concerning the hopeleſs ſtate of the *Heathens*, with Mr. *Hallett* (for I have reaſon to believe he was firſt miſled by this means) may be convinc'd of their error. And, indeed, it is upon their account that I have given my ſelf the trouble to confute this opinion; ſince, according to my own apprehenſions of the matter, it makes no alteration in the *preſent controverſy*, whether Mr. *Locke*'s notion be true or falſe; becauſe, if true, it can be known to be ſo only from *revelation*; and therefore, all thoſe who have no acquaintance with revelation muſt argue after exactly the ſame manner as they would have done, if there had been no ſuch threatning; and muſt argue *right* upon one ſuppoſition, as well as upon the other; foraſmuch as what would have been reaſon, in caſe

caſe there had been no ſuch threatning, muſt be reaſon ſtill, notwithſtanding that threatning, to them that know nothing of it, and ſo muſt be oblig'd to believe whatever their reaſon diſcovers to them; which therefore cannot be falſe. And, accordingly, Mr. *Locke* himſelf is more favourable to the *heathen world* than Mr. *H*——, his admirer and follower, is; for he *obſerves**, "that God had by the light of reaſon re-"veal'd to all mankind who would make "uſe of that light, that he was good and "merciful, and that the ſame ſpark of the "divine nature and knowledge, which ma-"king him a man ſhew'd him the law he "was under as a man, ſhew'd him alſo the "way of atoning the merciful, kind, com-"paſſionate author and father of him and "his Being, when he had tranſgreſs'd that "law. He that made uſe of this candle of "the Lord ſo far as to find what was his "duty, *could not miſs* to find alſo the way "to reconciliation and forgiveneſs, when "he had fail'd of his duty. —— This way "of reconciliation, this hope of atonement, "the *light of nature* reveal'd to them; and "the *revelation of the goſpel*, having ſaid "nothing to the contrary, leaves them to "ſtand and fall to their own father and ma-"ſter, whoſe goodneſs and mercy are over "all his works." I did not know whether

* Vol. II. Page 529.

Mr. *Hallett* might not have forgot this paſſage, and therefore thought it proper to put him in mind of it; as it might have ſome weight with him, though not in the way of authority, yet to make him review his notions with more diſtruſt and jealouſy, that he may have been in the wrong.

Sect. XIII. *Obſ.* 4. *The ſpiritual nature of the ſoul, and independence on the body, for its life and operation, are ſcripture doctrines.* There is a ſpirit in man, and the inſpiration of the Almighty giveth him underſtanding, *Job* xxxii. 8. The different *original* of the ſoul from the body, is a plain argument of its diſtinct, and more excellent *nature.* The body was form'd out of the duſt of the ground, the ſoul was more peculiarly the *offspring of God.* Gen. ii. 7. *And the Lord God formed man of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, and man became a living ſoul:* Comp. with *Eccl.* xii. 7. What *Moſes* ſaith of *man*, that he was *formed of the duſt of the ground*; *Solomon* explains of one *part* of him only, *then ſhall the duſt*, or the body of man, *return to the earth as it was*; and what one expreſſes by *breathing into man the breath of life*; the other calls *giving him a ſoul*; *then ſhall the duſt return to the earth as it was, and the ſoul to God who gave it.* So that by the *breath of life* is meant the *reaſonable ſoul* of man, though, perhaps, with a particular

ticular regard to its *animal faculties*, and by *God's breathing it into his noſtrils*, his giving it a Being by an immediate act of his power, and then uniting it to the body, already organiz'd and diſpos'd to receive it, in order to its being acted upon, and acting by it. The ſoul, therefore, did not ariſe out of the temperament of the body, but was immediately from God; an *effect* of the ſame nature as the *cauſe*; for *God is the father of ſpirits*, Heb. xii. 9. *We have had fathers of our fleſh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection to the father of ſpirits and live.* Here are two parts aſſign'd to man, *fleſh* and *ſpirit*; God is the *former* of our *fleſh*, but not the *parent*; men, on the contrary, are the parents of our *fleſh*, but not of our *ſpirits*; God alone is the father of theſe. This original of the ſoul from God as its *father*, demonſtrates its ſuperior nature. For *God is a ſpirit*, a pure uncompounded ſubſtance, without body, or bodily parts; therefore, ſuch alſo is the ſpirit of man, his offſpring. The ſoul of man then, according to the doctrine of *ſcripture*, is in its nature and original, entirely diſtinct from the body.

Sect. XIV. And from the nature of the ſoul it may be infer'd, with a high degree of probability, that the wiſe Creator intended it for a duration as boundleſs and unli-

mited as the nature he hath given it makes it capable of; and with the teſtimony of reaſon concerning the ſeparate exiſtence of the ſoul agrees that of *ſcripture*, which teaches us to make a diſtinction between the ſoul and body, in reſpect of their life and ſubſiſtence; a diſtinction ſo great, that when the body mingles with its original duſt, we are to conceive of the ſoul as returning to God who gave it; *i. e.* as exiſting out of the body, in a ſtate of happineſs, or miſery, as God who knows the reigning temper of every ſoul, and what its behaviour in the body hath been, ſhall appoint it. One would wonder, how this *ſeparate exiſtence* of the ſoul, when its union with the body is diſſolv'd, ſhould be diſputed by any who own the authority of the *bible*. *Our Saviour* hath warn'd us not to fear men, *who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul*, Matt. x. 28. which muſt ſuppoſe, that the ſoul lives out of the body; it being, in effect, the ſame thing, if men can put a period to the life of the ſoul by killing the body, as if they could kill the ſoul *immediately*. In the *parable* of the *rich man* and *Lazarus*, we read, that when they departed out of this world they did not paſs into a ſtate of inſenſibility, in which one of them could have no advantage above the other, but were ſtill alive, though in a condition as oppoſite one to the other, as

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Abraham's boſom, by which is underſtood a place of great repoſe and felicity, to that part of *Hades*, which is the receptacle of none but wicked and miſerable ſpirits; *Luke* xvi. from the 19th verſe to the end. *Our bleſſed Lord*, on the croſs, *commends his ſpirit into the hands of his Father*, Luke xxiii. 46. The like doth his *protomartyr*, *Stephen*, into the hands of his gracious Lord and Maſter, *Acts* vii. 59. And all the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus are encourag'd to do the ſame, 1 *Pet.* iv. 19. *Let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their ſouls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* So that the righteous, after the ſeparation of their ſouls from their bodies, are in the hand of God, or, which is the ſame thing, of their merciful Lord and Saviour, where they are not only kept ſafe from all danger, but enjoy a ſatisfaction and reſt vaſtly beyond what they ever knew in this world. Otherwiſe, were their ſouls as ſenſeleſs as their bodies, they might as well commend their bodies as their ſouls, or ſpirits, into the hand of God; ſince both are equally under his providential notice, and kept till the morning of the reſurrection. I ſhall add but one argument more; and that, indeed, is ſo clear and unconteſtable, as to render the mention of any more needleſs; I do not mean the *apoſtle* Paul's *deſire to depart, and be with*

Chriſt, tho' the argument here is to me irreſiſtible, ſince he might every jot as well have comforted himſelf with being *in the grave*, as *with Chriſt*, if his ſoul, with Chriſt, was to be as inſenſible, as his body in the grave. And how would this have been *ſo much better*, even for himſelf, than the ſatisfaction he had in a life, honourable to his beloved Maſter, and greatly uſeful to the church of God, and to mankind? What I have my eye to here, is St. *Paul's rapture to the third heaven*, ſpeaking of which, he ſaith twice, that *he could not tell, whether he was in the body or out of the body, when, being caught up into paradiſe, he heard things unutterable.* Now who does not ſee, there could be no room for this doubt, if the ſoul is ſo dependent upon the body, as no longer to live and think and act than while it is in it? for then, theſe extraordinary viſions and revelations would have prov'd that his ſoul could not have been ſeparate from his body, becauſe in ſuch a ſtate he could have perceiv'd and enjoy'd nothing.

Sect. XV. The *ſacred Scriptures* being thus clear and expreſs in this matter, if there are any obſcure paſſages which ſeem to ſpeak a contrary language, they ought to have their meaning fix'd by ſuch more plain and obvious ones as thoſe which have been now quoted. And after this, I hope the ar-

argument for a future ſtate from the *natural immortality of the ſoul* may ſtand firm when it is not only conſiſtent with *ſcripture-revelation*, but ſupported by it. Were it true, as ſome men have ſaid, that the *immateriality* of the ſoul is a notion of *pagan extraction*, which the *ſcripture* plainly diſapproves, all that are govern'd by the authority of ſcripture muſt give it up, and reſt the proof of a future ſtate from reaſon, wholly upon the *moral arguments*. But 'tis a ſatisfaction that no ſuch thing as this appears, but the contrary; by which means, the moral arguments inſinuate themſelves with much greater advantage into the mind, when the prejudice, from the materiality of the ſoul, and its neceſſary and total dependance on the body, is firſt remov'd.

Sect. XVI. This farther ſhews the miſtake of thoſe who tell us, as from *ſcripture*, that *if there be no reſurrection, there is no future ſtate*. And that the reaſoning of St. *Paul* in 1 *Cor.* 15. and of our *Saviour* himſelf, *Matt.* xxii. 31, 32. is founded upon this ſuppoſition. This from what hath been now prov'd appears to be falſe, ſuppoſing them to mean that *the reſurrection of the body is neceſſary to the notion of any future ſtate*, ſo as that there is no proving the latter unleſs the former be firſt prov'd. For ſince the ſoul is of a diſtinct nature from the body, according to the *ſcripture account*

of it, and does not actually die with it, the ſame *ſcripture* cannot ſay, that the ſoul would *naturally* die with the body, if the body was not to be rais'd again; it being impoſſible, that the *future reſurrection* of the body ſhould contribute by way of *natural cauſality* to the preſervation of the ſoul *in the mean while*; and therefore, *according to the natural courſe of things*, the ſoul which out-lives the body, now that there is to be a reſurrection, would have done the ſame, if there had been none. Mr. *Hallett* muſt not think to anſwer, that *then* the ſentence of death would have taken place on *both*, which, *at preſent*, takes hold only of the *body*. I have ſhewn before that there was no ſuch ſentence, and that, if there had been, there would have been the ſame neceſſity for executing it on the ſoul as on the body, in order to vindicate the truth and wiſdom of God. Not to add, that what is unknown, (as this ſentence of death is by the *light of nature*) cannot affect our *natural reaſonings* about the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate. Mr. *H*——, to be conſiſtent with himſelf, when he ſpeaks of the connexion between the reſurrection of the body, and a future ſtate, muſt ſuppoſe it to be *natural*; becauſe he ſays that the *Heathens*, according to the *Apoſtle*'s account of them, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 13. went upon this ſuppoſition, that if there would

would be no reſurrection of the body, there would be no future ſtate of happineſs for the ſoul *. Not to remark, that the *Apoſtle* was too well acquainted with the ſentiments and writings of the *Heathens* to give any ſuch account of them, which is contrary to *known fact*; it being certain that they did not expect the reſurrection of the body, and as certain that they did expect a ſtate of happineſs for virtuous ſouls; the thing I would here obſerve is, that, if in the apprehenſion of the *Heathens* themſelves, the future happy ſtate of the ſoul depended upon the reſurrection of the body, it muſt be becauſe the ſoul, according to them, is dependent on the body in its exiſtence and operations. The ſoul hath no future ſtate of *exiſtence*, if the body hath not, therefore no future ſtate of *happineſs*. It is thus they muſt have argued. Let him not ſay, that tho' the ſoul might exiſt and think, yet it could not be happy; unleſs he hath a mind to deny the happy ſtate of the *ſpirits of juſt men* in the interval between death and the reſurrection. Beſides, that if it were really ſo, that the ſoul could not be happy without the body; yet the *Heathens* could not be of that opinion, who, finding the body to be the ſource of numberleſs evils and calamities, and being ignorant of its having been once more hap-

* Page 299.

pily

pily form'd and diſpos'd, imagin'd, many of them, a ſtate of præexiſtence, for their ſins, in which, ſouls were impriſon'd in *terreſtrial bodies*, till the time of their puniſhment was expir'd, And, by the way, this makes me wonder to hear him talk in the ſtrange manner he does, *p.* 323. When men are dead they are puniſh'd for ſin; as long as they are in the grave they are actually under puniſhment. How then could men prove from reaſon, that God would raiſe them up from this ſtate of puniſhment? the *Heathens* having no knowledge of the *paradiſiacal ſtate* of man, and of immortality *in the body*, if man had not tranſgreſs'd, could not look upon it as the puniſhment of ſin to be divorc'd from ſuch a vile and wretched body as this. Death, in the preſent circumſtances of things, and by thoſe whoſe bodies ſunk under their own burthen, as well as under a load of outward evils, if their ſouls had the proſpect of a happy life beyond the grave, could not but be deem'd *a kind appointment of nature*; and as ſuch, accordingly, they talk of it.

Sect. XVII. But where then is the thread of our *Saviour*'s reaſoning; and of his *Apoſtle* St. *Paul?* As to the argument with which *our Lord* preſſes the unbelieving *Sadducees*; we are to conſider, that as theſe men denied both *the reſurrection of the body, and the ſeparate ſtate of the ſoul*, ſo our

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Saviour's argument concludes for both theſe; *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*; St. *Luke* adds, *chap.* xx. 38. *for all live to him.* Theſe words were ſpoken of theſe holy *Patriarchs* long after they ceaſed to live in this world; yet doth God ſtyle himſelf their God: but now, he is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Therefore, they were not *wholly* dead at that time; their ſouls liv'd *to God*, and *with* him, according to that of an ancient *Jewiſh writer*, that the ſouls of the righteous are in the hand of God*. But becauſe the ſoul is only a part of the man, and God's taking to himſelf the title of *the God of theſe good men*, implies that he would be *their exceeding great reward*, and becauſe too he is the God of the living, (which *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* were not at that time as to their *entire beings*;) therefore, they muſt live to God, not only as to their ſouls, which were actually living, but as to their bodies too, in reſpect of God's decree to raiſe them up, which renders the event ſo certain that *things, which are not, may*, on that account, *be called as if they were:* and, having reſtored them to life, he will beſtow that happineſs both of body and ſoul upon them, which will prove to the conviction

* Wiſdom 3. 1.

of

of the whole world, that he did not ſtyle himſelf *their God* without reaſon. Thus, our Saviour's argument reaches both the errors of this impious Sect, *viz.* That of the mortality of the ſoul, and the body's dying ſo as to riſe, and live, no more. But ſuppoſing, the thing intended to be prov'd by *Chriſt* was immediately no more than the reſurrection of the body, yet, in proving *this*, he *conſequentially* proves the ſoul's ſubſiſting after death; foraſmuch as it is neceſſary that the life of the ſoul ſhould continue uninterrupted, that the perſons *before death*, and *after the reſurrection*, may be the ſame, which they would not be if their life was *entirely new*.

Sect. XVIII. The *Apoſtle*'s argument, againſt thoſe chriſtians who denied the reſurrection, turns wholly on the *vanity and unprofitableneſs of the chriſtian profeſſion* upon their principles. For if there was to be no reſurrection of the dead, *then was Chriſt not riſen*; and if Chriſt was not riſen, they who believ'd in him as *dying for their offences, and riſing again for their juſtification*, were in the ſame condition as they would have been without this faith, and conſequently were *in*, or under the guilt of *their ſins*, if they were ſo before; their faith in Chriſt availing nothing to their deliverance from them, *ver.* 17. *Then, they alſo, that are fallen aſleep in Chriſt* (by whom

whom the *martyrs* ſeem more eſpecially to be intended) *are periſhed*, for any thing that Chriſt can do for them, who will never reward them for their ſufferings; never reſtore that life which they loſt for his ſake: *ver.* 18. he goes on, *If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable:* If Chriſtians are to receive no reward from their maſter after this life (which is the caſe, *if Chriſt be not riſen*) then they are ελεεινοτεροι παντων ανθρωπων, more to be pitied than any Men, as wanting the common underſtanding of men, to ſuffer, and much more to ſuffer death, for his ſake who would never be able to recompence them for it; loſing their life, without finding it again. The moſt difficult paſſage is ſtill behind, in the 32d verſe; but the ſame *Key* will let us into the meaning of it. *If after the manner of men I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me, if the dead riſe not? let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.* If the dead riſe not, then, is Chriſt not riſen, and if Chriſt be not riſen we can have no hope in him, as to any reward at all, and much leſs as to any reward after death. Why then ſhould we deny our ſelves the pleaſures of life, and fooliſhly run upon ſuch difficulties and hazards as might eaſily be avoided? as is done by the followers of Chriſt, and eſpecially by us his *Apoſtles*, and by my ſelf in par-

particular; who might have encounter'd with *wild beaſts* as ſafely as with ſome men, whom I have made my enemies by my boldneſs and conſtancy in the chriſtian faith. We have the ſame natural deſires and appetites as other men; and as we muſt be men of no principles, if, knowing Chriſt not to be riſen, we endeavour to perſwade the world that he is; and that the goſpel is a divine religion, when we are conſcious to its being at beſt but *a cunningly deviſed fable*; as, I ſay, upon this ſuppoſition we can have no fear of God before our Eyes, no apprehenſions of an after reckoning, but muſt be meer *Epicureans* in principle, why don't we reaſon, as other *Epicureans* do, conſiſtently with the freedom of our notions, and as thoſe libertines, whom the prophet *Iſaiah* deſcribes, *Iſa.* xxii. 13. *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.* Let us not, for the poor pleaſure of deluding the world with a falſe ſtory, ſacrifice our eaſe, affect to lead a life of abſtinence and mortification, draw upon our ſelves the diſpleaſure of the great and powerful, and die before our time. Rather, let us indulge our inclinations, and paſs a ſhort life as pleaſantly as we can. This would be our wiſeſt way, if Chriſt were not riſen, and we who call our ſelves his Apoſtles, were perſons of no religion, no faith, and honeſty. *But be not deceived, evil communications*

nications corrupt good manners. Theſe are only the ſuggeſtions of evil-minded men; things are quite otherwiſe than I have here ſuppos'd them, for arguments ſake, and to expoſe the abſurdity of them. We are not falſe witneſſes, but know Chriſt to be riſen, and do therefore contentedly ſuffer ſo many things for his and the goſpel's ſake; and Chriſt being riſen, we aſſure you, in conſequence of this great and fundamental doctrine of chriſtianity, of the reſurrection of all men, and particularly of the glorious reſurrection of thoſe who are *Chriſt's at his coming.* They who would have you believe otherwiſe, are perſons from whoſe converſation you can reap no advantage, either as to your principles, or morals. Here is no occaſion, then, for having recourſe to that ſuppoſition, *no reſurrection, no future ſtate,* to help out the *Apoſtle*'s reaſoning, which appears to be very clear and eaſie without it; the true and entire chain being this; if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is the reſurrection of Jeſus a fable; if the reſurrection of Jeſus be a fable, we who invented this fable, or, knowing it to be ſuch, would impoſe it upon the world for a certain truth, muſt not only think that there is no reſurrection of the body, but that there is no other life beſides this, no future account, or can be under no reſtraints from the

the conſideration of it; and therefore ſhould not, like fools and madmen, part with all the ſolid bleſſings of life for the ſake of propagating an impoſture, but, more agreeably to our real character, and the looſe principles we muſt have entertain'd, if we were deceivers, abandon our ſelves to a life of eaſe, and of ſenſual pleaſure and indulgence. For want of obſerving the intermediate links, *if the dead riſe not, Chriſt is not riſen; if Chriſt is not riſen, we are wicked impoſtors that have no regard to a future ſtate*, (which are plainly underſtood, tho' not expreſt) ſome have been at a loſs for the *Apoſtle*'s meaning; while others have quite miſtaken it, by imagining an *immediate* connexion between the *principle* ſuppos'd, *that the dead riſe not*, and the *inference, let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*; and, upon this miſtake, have advanc'd an opinion that is, in its natural conſequence, deſtructive of all religion.

Sect. XIX. *Obſerv.* 5. *The ſcripture-revelation, having expreſly declar'd a judgment to come, to which all mankind ſhall be ſummoned, cannot teach any thing which implies this final judgment is neceſſarily unknown to any part of the world; as it muſt be to multitudes if reaſon be ſilent about it.* The *firſt part* of this propoſition, *viz. that the ſcripture hath expreſly declar'd a future, univerſal, judgment*, is eaſily prov'd. The terms,

terms, in which this judgment is ſpoken of, are extenſive and unlimited, *God will judge the world*, Acts xvii. 31. *Rom.* iii. 6. *It is appointed to men once to die, and after this the judgment*, Heb. ix. 27. The judgment here refer'd to is *after death*; and as it is appointed that *all* ſhall die, ſo that *all* ſhall be judged; there is not the leaſt hint added to reſtrain the judgment to ſome, excluſive of others. If it ſhould be ſuggeſted, without all appearance of reaſon, that there may be a ſecret limitation in thoſe places; we have others that cannot be ſo evaded, *Matt.* x. 15. *It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city*, which ſhall not receive you my Apoſtles, nor hear your words. The inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, who were *Heathens*, are to appear in judgment; and, *wicked as they were, and ſinners before the Lord exceedingly*, ſhall eſcape better than thoſe who had the offers of goſpel-grace, and refus'd it, *Acts* xxiv. 25. *As he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled.* Why, but to awaken the conſcience of this *heathen governor* did the *Apoſtle Paul* inſiſt upon theſe topicks? And why did this harden'd ſinner, tho' a *Pagan*, tremble to hear the great *Apoſtle of the Gentiles* diſcourſe of theſe things, if he was not conſcious to his own intemperance and in-

juſtice, and apprehenſive that he, who now ſat in judgment upon a better man than himſelf, ſhould hereafter be call'd before a higher tribunal? *Rom.* ii. 12. *As many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law,* — Ver. 16. *In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt.*

Sect. XX. Theſe places, to which others might be added, are clear and deciſive for the *univerſality* of the future judgment. And it cannot be (which is the *other part* of the propoſition) that when *all men* are to be judg'd, any of them ſhould be *neceſſarily* ignorant of that judgment, which yet is unavoidable, as to much the greater part of the world, if the *light of nature* does not manifeſt it to them. Men are judg'd that they may *receive according to what they have done in the body, whether it be good, or evil*; and there is not a more *powerful motive*, to ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well, than *the conſideration of the influence which theſe things will have on our final account*, and the ſentence following it. And *this motive* is not more *powerful and perſwaſive*, than *all others*, without it, are *weak and ineffectual*; for both which reaſons, *viz.* the *ſufficiency* of this, and the *inſufficiency* of any other motive, we may aſſure our ſelves that no part of mankind are left *without witneſs* in this reſpect; that is, without the means

means of knowing that they muſt hereafter *give an account of themſelves to God*; we are as ſure of this as that God *will be clear when he judgeth*, and that *the judge of all the earth cannot but do right.*

Sect. XXI. I might argue from thoſe *ſcripture authorities* for more than the certainty of *a future ſtate*; from *reaſon* even for *future rewards* obtainable by all mankind, and, in ſome degree, *diſcoverable* by them. For what room can there be for judgment, where men were never in *a ſtate of trial?* Or what trial can there be where there is *no poſſibility*, at leaſt, *no moral poſſibility* of doing the things that are requir'd of us, that we may pleaſe God, our judge, and be accepted of him? A judgment to come preſuppoſes a ſtate of trial and probation; a ſtate of trial implies that it is in the power of men to do good, or evil; a power to do theſe, is an argument of its being in their choice to be either happy or miſerable. Elſe, what is called the *Judgment to come*, is not ſo properly ſuch, as a publick and final declaration of *God's abſolute decree* to ſave ſome, and deſtroy others. But of the manner of God's dealing with thoſe who are *without a revelation* more will be ſaid under the following obſervation.

Sect. XXII. *Obſ.* 6. *When we take a view of the two grand counterparts of the ſcheme of providence, in the correſpondence they have*

one to the other, viz. *the fall of man, and his recovery, or the damage ſuſtain'd by the human nature and race in* Adam, *and the reparation of it by Jeſus Chriſt*; *we have reaſon to think that theſe two had a neceſſary relation to, and dependance upon, one another, in the deſign of God*; *ſo as that the poſterity of fallen man lie under no incapacity for attaining happineſs and immortality but what is remov'd by the Saviour of the world*; *and what would not have been permitted but upon this appointment*. This ſupplies an eaſy vindication of the conduct of providence towards our lapſed race, which, upon any other principles, muſt be attended with inextricable doubts and difficulties, and repreſents the attributes of God in the moſt amiable light. And, for ought I can ſee, it is not only perfectly agreeable with the principles of *ſcripture revelation*, but countenanc'd by ſeveral hints and paſſages in it.

Sect. XXIII. The promiſe given immediately after the *fall*, that *the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head*; or that an extraordinary perſon, to be born of a woman, deſcended from *her* over whoſe weakneſs and credulity the devil had now triumph'd, ſhould gain as compleat a victory over this proud and malicious ſpirit, as that which was the ground of his preſent exultation; this promiſe, I ſay, being

being ſo *early*, and expreſs'd after ſuch a manner, intimates the concern which *all the children of men* had in it. *Adam* and *Eve* had no child when this promiſe was made; the promiſe, therefore, was to them, and to their ſeed after them, of all ages and nations. They had loſt immortality by liſtening to the temptation of the enemy, and they had loſt it both for themſelves, and all their deſcendants; and what could they think, or what can we reaſonably conclude, leſs, than that ſince this immortality was to be regain'd by a *ſecond man* (yet *more* than man) who was to be the great Champion and Redeemer of human-kind, as all were to be involv'd in the conſequences of the firſt apoſtaſy, ſo none ſhould be ſhut out from a ſhare in the conqueſt to be obtain'd by the Saviour of the world; ſuch only excepted, as ſhould deprive themſelves of a part in it. If we conſider the ſame promiſe as renew'd to *Abraham*, we find it runs in the moſt general terms; *In thee* (that is, in the *Meſſiah*, who is to ſpring from thee) *ſhall all the families, or nations, of the earth be bleſſed*, Gen. xii. 3. compar'd with *Gal.* iii. 8. But how are all the nations bleſſed in the *promis'd ſeed*, if thoſe nations only are ſo that actually enjoy the goſpel, who bear but a ſmall proportion to the nations which have profeſs'd, and do ſtill live under, other religions?

Sect. XXIV. And, accordingly, concerning the redemption of men from that death which came into the world by the firſt ſin, we are told, that *as in* Adam *all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive:* And for what end? only that they may die again, or become more miſerable? God forbid. They ſhall not continue for ever under the dominion of death, for the ſin of *Adam*; nor be render'd incapable of happineſs and immortality by any impotence and corruption of nature, which they inherit from him; but ſhall have ſtrength given them to perform all that God demands from ſuch frail and lapſed creatures, in order to entitle them to his favour, and ſhall enjoy a happineſs ſuitable to their imperfect, if ſincere, obedience, for the ſake of that great Redeemer, who undertakes to mediate for them; for *as the Father hath life in himſelf*, ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf (or a power to communicate life, by raiſing men from the dead) *and hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo* (to reward and puniſh men, as their univerſal Lord, and judge) *becauſe he is the ſon of man* (that perſon, concerning whom it was propheſied that God would give him a univerſal and everlaſting dominion, and by whom he hath appointed to judge the world in righteouſneſs.) *Marvel not at this* (to hear me ſpeak in this ſtyle, of my quickening whom

I will, and being the Lord, and Judge of all) *for the hour is coming, in the which all* (not a few perſons only, as at my reſurrection, which is juſt at hand, *ver.* 25. but all) *that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth, they that have done good to the reſurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the reſurrection of damnation,* John v. 26——29. from this moſt remarkable place we learn that the laſt reſurrection will be univerſal; that the author of it will be the Lord Jeſus in the quality of Mediator; and that the reaſon of the difference which there will be between the reſurrection of ſome and of others, is the difference in their characters and actions, they that have done good, being raiſed to a life of happineſs, and thoſe only to damnation that have done evil. All that are in the graves ſhall come forth; men of every age, and nation, and religion, Heathens as well as Chriſtians: For how are we to conſider the reſurrection of *wicked Chriſtians?* that it cannot be in the nature of a *reward* every one muſt be ſenſible; nor will it be immediately and directly as a *puniſhment* of their own ſins; it being very unlikely that the ſin of *Adam* ſhould be *puniſh'd* with *death*, and the ſins of *his poſterity* with *a reſurrection from the dead*; that they riſe *to damnation*, is, becauſe they have done evil, but not that they riſe *at all*; this muſt be for a reaſon that

equally affects all mankind, *viz. That the creature was made ſubject to vanity, not willingly, but by reaſon of him that ſubjected the ſame in hope; becauſe the creature it ſelf ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*, Rom. viii. 20, 21. that is, the whole race of mankind became liable to death, not for any perſonal offences of the individuals, but by the ſovereign appointment of their Maker and Judge for the ſin of the *firſt man*, which was ſoon after his creation, not without a gracious deſign of making up this loſs to them by the obedience of a ſecond, and more honourable Head of the human kind; in reference to which deſign it may be juſtly ſaid that mankind in general (not thoſe under a written or reveal'd *law* only, but *all* conſider'd as ſtanding in no other relation to God than that of *his creatures*) were made ſubject to death in hope of the redemption of the body, which is the laſt ſolemn adoption of the ſons of God. I will not be ſure, I have hit the meaning of this obſcure place; but however, think what I have offer'd may paſs among other conjectures. The thing I am arguing for is farther confirm'd by the deſcription we have in ſcripture, of the final judgment, as uſher'd in by the reſurrection from the dead; the former extending to all without exception (as was prov'd under the laſt obſervation)

ſervation) and therefore, the latter. And, becauſe none ſhall come forth to *the reſurrection of damnation* but thoſe that have done evil (τα φαυλα πραξαντες; have liv'd in a courſe of wickedneſs) and becauſe the holineſs and goodneſs of God will not ſuffer us to ſay that men do evil out of neceſſity; the *inference* lies plain, that no part of mankind are incapable of attaining to a *happy* reſurrection, through the merits of that *divine perſon* by whom they ſhall be rais'd.

Sect. XXV. Another argument, to prove that all men, in this life are upon their probation for the rewards of another, may be drawn from that place in the 2d chapter to the *Romans*, before quoted. *Then* I only argued for the *univerſality* of the *future judgment*, from the connection between the *twelfth* and the *ſixteenth verſes*. *Now*, I ſhall farther infer the *rewardableneſs* of the good actions of *Heathens* themſelves from what intervenes between thoſe *two verſes*, concerning natural conſcience in theſe men, which is ſuppos'd to *excuſe* as well as *accuſe* them; both which acts of conſcience have their chief reference to, and, if they do not proceed on a miſtake, will be ratified by, the *authoritative abſolution or condemnation of all*, which will be pronounc'd *in the day, when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of all men* (bring to light the true characters of men, till

till then ſecret, or hidden) *by Jeſus Chriſt.* Yet *once more*, 'tis obſervable, that the *Apoſtle* having, in that chapter, ſhewn that there is no reſpect of perſons with God, but every man ſhall be judg'd by the law he hath liv'd under, and condemn'd by that law, if he hath liv'd diſconformably thereto, *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*, yea, the *Jews* firſt, proceeds to aſk in the perſon of an *objector*, *Chap.* iii. 1. *What advantage then hath the* Jew? To which queſtion his anſwer is; *Much every way, chiefly, that to them are committed the oracles of God*; not, chiefly, that one may be ſav'd, the other not; which yet, one would think, ſhould have been the more direct, and proper anſwer, if, as ſome are of opinion, the ſalvation of the *Heathens* be a thing impoſſible. The *Jews*, before Chriſtianity, *had*, and the *followers of Jeſus* ſince, *have* the ordinary, and ſupernatural means of ſalvation; and are therein privileg'd above others, whoſe ſalvation, tho' it be poſſible, is yet much more hazardous; neither, have they any promiſe to encourage and eſtabliſh their hopes, as thoſe have who are favour'd with a revelation of God's purpoſes of grace towards men.

Sect. XXVI. So that we are not only able to prove a *future ſtate* from *ſcripture*, for all mankind; but likewiſe, a future ſtate

ſtate of *rewards and puniſhments.* And it is but fit that all ſhould have ſome knowledge of this ſtate, though *all* do not know ſo much concerning it as *ſome*, nor are, perhaps, capable of enjoying the ſame degree of felicity. It is not neceſſary they ſhould know that the reward of virtue will partly conſiſt in raiſing the body, and endowing it with more excellent qualities than this *mortal body* can boaſt, nor is it neceſſary that the very ſame happineſs ſhould be reſerv'd for *virtuous Heathens*, and *pious Chriſtians*; but, if future happineſs be attainable for thoſe who are deſtitute of a revelation, it is neceſſary that, without a revelation they ſhould be able to diſcover *that* there is ſuch a happineſs, though not *what* it is, and to diſcover it with *a degree of evidence* ſufficient to convince any man, not wedded to his luſts, that it is his intereſt and wiſdom to lead a ſober, righteous, and godly life. And this will greatly facilitate the anſwer to an objection againſt the Goſpel, from *its imperfect promulgation*, not more common than plauſible; and, according to the ſcheme which ſome have framed of Chriſtianity, utterly unanſwerable. The Goſpel is a moſt invaluable favour and bleſſing to thoſe that enjoy it, as will be ſhewn under the *next chapter*; but, as long as it is not of ſuch abſolute neceſſity that there is no hope

hope of future happineſs for others to whom this heavenly light hath never come; and the providence of God was pleas'd to put things on ſuch a foot for the univerſal publication of it, that, in all appearance, it could not have been plac'd on a better, conſidering that it was to be propagated from one ſingle city and country, as from a common center, and by one ſet of men, who had been witneſſes to the life and death, and reſurrection, the doctrines and miracles of the divine author and founder of this religion; I ſay, conſidering this, the main weight of the difficulty is remov'd, and we can eaſily conceive that there might be good reaſons why God was not pleas'd to continue with the preachers of the goſpel, a power of working miracles, and by *extraordinary* means and inſtruments, to overcome the oppoſition that the princes and nations of the earth made againſt the introduction of Chriſtianity among them, till it ſhould have quite baniſh'd every other religion out of the world. Whereas, if men muſt unavoidably periſh without a revelation, and the goſpel-revelation is vouchſafed to ſome, and not to others, though equally adapted to promote the intereſt of all; What can be offer'd to abate the prejudices of the enemies to Chriſtianity; or to relieve the minds of thoſe who are beſt affected to it, from that perplexity which ſuch a diſpenſation

penſation of providence muſt needs throw them into?

Sect. XXVII. "But the ſuppoſition that "men can prove a future ſtate of rewards "for repenting ſinners, by the mere light "of nature, is contrary to the doctrine of "the goſpel concerning the myſtery of the "ſalvation of the *Gentiles*, *Eph.* iii. 4—6.* Wonderful reaſoning! it was a *myſtery*, or a thing not fully known till reveal'd, that the *Gentiles* ſhould, together with the *Jews*, conſtitute one *Church*, or ſacred ſociety, eſtabliſh'd upon *a covenant of grace* expreſly promiſing, among other bleſſings, eternal life to all that believe, *without reſpect of perſons*; *therefore*, reaſon cannot prove any future rewards *at all* for the ſincere lovers of virtue and goodneſs. I ſhall not ſo far reflect on my reader's underſtanding as to ſuppoſe he needs my help in finding out the weakneſs of this argument.

Sect. XXVIII. If it be ask'd, whether this be not the acknowledg'd doctrine of the goſpel, that *men are juſtified by faith*; I ſhall return no other anſwer than thoſe words of the *Apoſtle Paul*, as thinking them abundantly ſufficient, *we know that whatſoever things the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the law*, Rom. iii. 19. By *parity of reaſon*; the Goſpel being directed to none but thoſe that hear it, is a Rule for them,

* Mr. *H*——*tt*, pag. 353.

and

and not for others. Is it made the condition of *eternal life* that we believe in the ſon of God? Is there no being juſtified and ſaved without faith? Is *Jeſus* the only mediator between God and man, and is it neceſſary that we truſt in him under that character? all this is manifeſtly deſign'd for ſuch, and ſuch only, as profeſs the goſpel, or have had it fairly propounded to them. The perſons cut off, by theſe and the like *ſcriptures*, from the hopes of pardon, and ſalvation, are no others but thoſe who either reject the goſpel from the influence of ſome corrupt principle, which blinds their minds, and fills them with prejudices againſt it; or who, pretending to believe and embrace the goſpel, will not be perſwaded to comply with the great deſign of it. As to others, we may ſay as the great *Apoſtle* does, *what have we to do to judge them that are without? them that are without God judgeth.* 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. He judgeth them, not by a rule of which they know nothing, but by giving them *the law in the mind*, and, according to that, paſſing ſentence upon them in the laſt day.

Sect. XXIX. "But it is farther urg'd, "that it appears from ſcripture that no "man would have been pardon'd and re- "warded with eternal life, unleſs the ſon of "God had ſuffer'd and died for men, and

"there-

"thereby made ſatisfaction to God *." I freely own it to be my opinion, that God diſpences every bleſſing to our *fallen race* in and through a *Mediator*; that even the *common* mercies of life are convey'd in this way, and much more *ſpiritual*, and *ſaving* ones, ſuch as the forgiveneſs of ſin, and the rewards of another life. But this cannot be made to prove that they have no ground to expect thoſe marks of the divine goodneſs, who have no claim to them on the foot of *juſtice*, and are ignorant of the *purpoſe of God* to confer them only *by the hands of a Mediator*. I am aware that Mr. *H——tt* deſign'd the main ſtreſs of this argument to bear upon the *neceſſity* of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, in reſpect of the *end* to be anſwer'd by it, *the recovery of loſt ſinners*; and its *freedom* in regard of our *offended Sovereign*, who might have choſe whether he would have appointed, or accepted, any ſatisfaction at all. And, if he had not, what had become of the human race? Muſt it not have periſh'd without remedy? but now, that God hath provided ſuch a ſatisfaction they only know, to whom he hath been pleas'd to reveal it. This is the argument in its full force, and whether it proves what Mr. *H——tt* intended by it we ſhall be able to judge, when we have

* Mr. *H——tt*, pag. 331.

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examin'd in *what ſenſe* a ſatisfaction was neceſſary, and upon *what accounts*.

Sect. XXX. The ſatisfaction of Chriſt may be conſider'd with regard to the *firſt tranſgreſſion*, and its *immediate conſequences*; or to the *actual*, *preſumptuous*, and *repeated* offences of mankind. As to the *firſt ſin*, with its *immediate* conſequences, *viz.* a proneneſs to ſin, and a liableneſs to death, the neceſſity of Chriſt's undertaking ſeems *immediately* to ariſe from the *decree* of God, that the human nature, being vitiated by man's eating the forbidden fruit, ſhould be tranſmitted in this feeble and ruinous condition to his poſterity, who yet ſhould not have any title to *immortality* (it muſt be remember'd, I ſpeak of immortality both of ſoul and body) but by a righteouſneſs which ſhould be every way perfect; *remotely* from the *wiſdom* of this decree concerning the lapſe of the human nature in *Adam*, in order to its recovery by *Chriſt*. It *immediately* ariſeth from the decree it ſelf. God was pleas'd to fix it as an unalterable law, that no righteouſneſs ſhould convey a title to immortality, (or freedom from death) that was not without all mixture and defect. But now, ſuch a compleat, ſinleſs righteouſneſs as this, is out of the reach of the ſons and daughters of *Adam*, who, therefore, muſt not only die, but continue under the power of death, if a way

be

be not found out in which they may be inveſted with a new title to what they could, otherwiſe, never claim. Indeed, were they *perfectly righteous*, they would have a claim to it, tho' the poſterity of ſinful parents; there would then be *a law giving life, and righteouſneſs*, or juſtification unto life, *would be by that law*; as the *Apoſtle* himſelf allows, *Gal.* iii. 21. who, therefore, adds, that *the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.* The *promiſe by faith* is given only to them that believe; he does not ſay, the benefits purchas'd by Chriſt are imparted to them only.

Sect. XXXI. And, if I am not much miſtaken, this is one thing intended by the ſame writer, when he ſaith, *Rom.* v. 12. *that by one man ſin enter'd into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, becauſe all have ſinned.* The meaning of this place, which hath occaſion'd ſo much angry diſpute, ſeems to be no more than this, that *there is no man liveth and ſhall not ſee death*, becauſe *there is no man liveth and ſinneth not*; ſo that tho' it was by *one man* that ſin came into the world, and death by ſin, yet ſhould not *death have actually paſſed* upon all men, if all, as they grew up to reaſon, had not *actually ſinned*; the *Jew, after the ſimilitude of Adam's*

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tranſgreſſion, againſt a poſitive law; the *Gentile*, not after the ſame ſimilitude, but only againſt the *law of nature*. This, like ſome other general expreſſions in ſcripture, muſt be reſtrain'd by the nature and circumſtances of the caſe. *He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16. Either this aſſertion muſt be limited to thoſe that are capable of believing, or elſe *infants* will be excluded by it, not from *baptiſm* only, but dying in infancy, from *ſalvation* too. There is a like reaſon for underſtanding the expreſſion, *all have ſinned*, in a reſtrictive ſenſe; all die by virtue of that law of mortality, to which all are made ſubject by *Adam*'s ſin; and yet the reaſon that death actually paſſes upon all men, or that God doth not miraculouſly interpoſe to make men immortal, contrary to the preſent tendency of their nature, is that all men, capable of ſinning, have ſinned, and do in many things ſin and offend all. We have one example to prove the truth of this notion; and it is ſufficient for the purpoſe, tho' but one. I mean, *our bleſſed Saviour*, who, tho' the ſon of *Adam*, was not devoted to death by that ſentence which appoints that *all men ſhall die*, becauſe *he was without ſin*, and the only perſon that ever was ſo. And, having a right in his own life, which was not forfeited by any

any law, he had power to lay it down as a valuable ranſom for the lives of mankind, and power to take it again, as a proof that he had made compleat ſatisfaction by his death, and would reſtore them to life for whom he died. This thought I owe to an ingenious friend, who, when I had been propoſing my conjecture to him on the meaning of that difficult place, very happily ſuggeſted this as a confirmation of it.

Sect. XXXII. The neceſſity of Chriſt's ſatisfaction in order to obtain immortality for thoſe who had no righteouſneſs of their own to ground a title to it upon, does *remotely* ariſe from the *wiſdom* of this decree concerning the lapſe of the human nature in *Adam*, and its recovery by *Jeſus Chriſt*. That God, whoſe *underſtanding is infinite*, ſaw fit to create intelligent beings of different ſpecies; ſome, as the *angels*, immediately deriving their exiſtence from him; others, as *mankind*, receiving and communicating it by propagation from father to ſon. Suitable to this diverſity of nature between angels and mankind, hath been the oeconomy of providence towards them. Angels from the beginning, ſeem to have had, each of them, their entire doom lodg'd in their own hand; becauſe being contemporary and independent, every one among them was capable of acting for himſelf. But, as all mankind

was to branch from a ſingle ſtock, God was pleas'd ſo to order things, that the branches ſhould partake of the good or evil qualities of the ſtock. In conſequence of this, one man ruins the human race, and another reſtores it. By the firſt man's diſobedience *many* were *made ſinners*; by the obedience of the ſecond *many* are *made righteous*; *all* ſo far as to be put into a capacity of a bleſſed immortality; and all, who do not diſqualify themſelves by final impenitency, ſo as actually to enjoy it. The firſt man did not more diſhonour God, and debaſe the human nature by his rebellion againſt God, and eaſie compliance with the temptation of the devil; than the latter hath done honour to *both*, by doing and ſuffering the will of his heavenly father, and conflicting with, and bravely ſurmounting all the powers of darkneſs. In the conſequences of the fall, God's high diſpleaſure againſt ſin is made known, for a warning to all, who ſhall hear thereof, how they wilfully offend. In ſending his ſon to redeem the children of men, and to redeem them by dying, his hatred of ſin, and compaſſionate love of ſinners are equally diſplaid.

Sect. XXXIII. Thus ſtands the neceſſity of Chriſt's ſatisfaction with regard to the *firſt ſin*, and its *immediate* conſequences, *viz.* a proneneſs to ſin, and liableneſs to death.

death. But as the neceſſity of any ſatisfaction in this view can be known only to thoſe who are acquainted with the fall and recovery of man, ſo it cannot affect our *natural* reaſonings on this ſubject; from which we learn nothing concerning the reſurrection and immortality of the body, and the neceſſity of a mediator to procure it, for want of principles to proceed upon, (not ſo much as knowing that mortality was the effect of ſin) but conclude with ſome certainty, that there will be *future recompences*; and that, particularly, as to the happineſs of another life, perfect innocence is not the only condition upon which ſuch imperfect creatures as we are may hope to obtain it.

Sect. XXXIV. If we conſider the queſtion with regard to the *actual*, *preſumptuous*, and *repeated*, offences of mankind; the neceſſity of ſatisfaction to the great governor of the world, that ſuch guilty creatures may be admitted to favour, and much more, that they may be entitled to a ſtate of glory and immortality, *riſes ſtill higher*; and is not altogether hidden from *natural reaſon*. But then, as *guilt* hath different degrees, ſo hath the *neceſſity* of a ſatisfaction. For thoſe who have in the main liv'd virtuouſly, tho' not without all preſumptuous ſin, or ſuch ſin as they knew to be ſuch, and might with due reſolution

and vigilance, have avoided the neceſſity of a ſatisfaction, over and above their repentance, that they may be pardon'd their errors, and become capable of a lower reward, being, by no means, ſo manifeſt to reaſon, as for flagitious crimes, for a courſe of wickedneſs, or for a general diſſolution of manners. And accordingly, it hath been only about theſe latter, that men have appear'd to be ſolicitous to appeaſe the wrath of heaven, by *extraordinary*, and even *human* ſacrifices; while their confidence in the divine goodneſs and mercy hath been ſuch, as to rely upon it, with very little heſitation for the favourable acceptance of virtuous ſincerity, and the forgiveneſs of ſuch ſins as may, in great part, be charg'd upon human frailty, and do not argue a predominance of the vitious principle. Nor were they *without hope*, when their ſins were more crying and aggravated; as may be ſeen in the inſtance of the men of *Nineveh*, who, on no other encouragement than what this hope gave them, repented at the preaching of *Jonah*, which they would not have done, if they had apprehended the caſe to be deſperate. This example is the more memorable for the notice which our bleſſed Lord hath taken of it.

Sect. XXXV. The ſcripture informs us that *all ſin* (the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt excepted) *ſhall be forgiven unto men.* And,

if

if it be ſaid that this is purely in conſideration of the atonement made for them by the ſacrifice of the croſs, without which they would not have been pardonable: I own it to be highly proper for ſinners to have the miſery of their condition without a Saviour ſet before them in the moſt affecting view; provided, it be done only to magnify the wonderful love of God in ſending his Son into the world *to ſave ſinners*, the *greateſt of ſinners*; to ſave them, not barely by turning away the vengeance they had deſerv'd, and making them happy in an inferior degree; but by tranſlating them into a ſtate of glory and felicity exceeding the pretenſions of innocence it ſelf. In thus magnifying the love of God in the redemption of a ſinful world (add, his wiſdom and holineſs in the method choſen for this purpoſe) I would not willingly come behind any. But if, when they ſpeak of the need of a Saviour, they would farther inſinuate that mens natural notions of the divine goodneſs give them *no reaſonable hope of forgiveneſs*; not even of thoſe ſins which are conſiſtent with an unfeigned love of their duty; *no hope of future happineſs*, tho' in the *loweſt* degree, and for the *higheſt* degree of virtue they can attain to; or, if they think that God would have ſuffer'd mankind to fall into their preſent ſtate of ignorance and weakneſs, which tho' it be

not the *proper cauſe*, is yet the *remote occaſion* of their abounding wickedneſs, if he had not mercifully determin'd to provide a remedy every way equal to the diſeaſe: If theſe, I ſay, be their ſentiments, I muſt beg leave to differ from them, and apprehend, I have the ſcripture on my ſide. Even greater tranſgreſſions are occaſion'd, tho' not neceſſarily produc'd, by the unhappy circumſtances in which mankind are born and educated, which is, probably, one reaſon that for theſe alſo *men* may obtain pardon, thro' a *Mediator*, while *ſinning angels*, having brought every one himſelf into a ſtate of guilt and miſery, are reſerv'd in chains of darkneſs, and without all hope of redemption, unto the judgment of the great day.

Sect. XXXVI. But are not the *Heathens* every where, in *ſcripture*, repreſented as men *without hope*. Let us examine the particular places, *Eph.* ii. 12. *Strangers to the covenants of promiſe*; *having no hope*. "The "Gentiles were deſtitute of the knowledge "of the *Abrahamic* covenant, and ſo had "no knowledge of any divine promiſe of "happineſs in a future ſtate; the conſe-"quence of which was, that they had no "hope of ſuch future happineſs *." Thus Mr. *Hallett*; who, if he had not been too full of his hypotheſis, to ſee the plaineſt

* Page 343.

things

things that make againſt it, might have anſwer'd himſelf. The hope here meant is not barely of *future* good things; but of any at all, even of the favour and protection of God in the preſent life; and therefore, when the *Gentiles* are ſaid to have no hope, it muſt ſignify hope founded in a *covenant*, to which hope the *Jews* were begotten by the promiſes made to their fathers. Any hopes of this kind the *Gentiles* had not; and yet, for any thing this proves to the contrary, might abound in that hope which hath its original from the eſſential goodneſs of the divine nature, conſider'd with the comment of a kind and bountiful providence upon it. The *connexion* of the words, *ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe*; *having no hope*, ſhews this to be the meaning. Another place is *Col.* i. 27. *Chriſt in you the hope of glory.* "The "hope of glory was a myſtery or ſecret "among the *Gentiles* before the coming of "Chriſt, and conſequently, they had no "foundation for the hope of a future ſtate "of rewards for penitent ſinners, till Chriſt "brought them a divine and expreſs pro-"miſe of it *." The word *glory* ſeems to denote the dignity which the bodies of the juſt ſhall be inveſted with after the reſurrection, according to that of the ſame *Apoſtle*, Phil. iii. 21. *who ſhall change our vile body,*

* Page 357.

that

that it may be faſhioned like to his moſt glorious body. And of *this glory*, 'tis certain, we owe *all* our hopes to the chriſtian revelation. Or, if the word ſignify any thing more than this, 'tis that *tranſcendent* and *everlaſting* felicity, which the *Heathens* could have but glimmering conceptions of: Notwithſtanding which, they might be very well perſuaded that virtuous ſouls ſhould not be without all teſtimonies of God's gracious acceptance of them in another life. So far then we are got ſafe, and, I fancy, we have as little to apprehend from 1 Theſſ. iv. 13. *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as others who have no hope.* That is, no hope concerning them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth, that they ſhall awake, and riſe to glory. That this muſt be (at leaſt part of) the ſenſe, is plain from hence, that the *Heathens* had hope concerning their virtuous friends and relations (and *Chriſtians* have no hope with reſpect to *theirs* that were not ſuch) of their being happy after death; the effect of which hope, to moderate their ſorrows, did not depend upon its being rightly grounded. Which proves that the Apoſtle could not lay the ſtreſs on this, that the *Gentiles* had hope indeed, but no hope that was reaſonable, ſince it is not the *reaſonableneſs*, but the *ſtrength* of the hope to which it

it immediately owes its influence in calming mens griefs and fears: "But, ſaith "M. *H—tt*, they went upon a ſuppoſition "that if there would be no reſurrection of "the body, there would be no future ſtate "of happineſs for the ſoul;" to which I ſhall ſay nothing farther, having conſider'd, and anſwer'd this objection of his before. Upon the whole; *Heathens* may be very juſtly ſaid to be *without hope*, when compared with *Chriſtians*, becauſe they have *no ſuch hope* as *Chriſtians* have; they don't hope for the *ſame thing*; the compleat, and everlaſting happineſs of ſoul and body; nor does their hope ſtand on the *ſame foundation*. The *religion* which *Chriſtians* profeſs is the foundation of all their aſſurance; whereas, from the *religions eſtabliſhed among the Heathens* they had no ground of hope at all. The publick religions were every where idolatrous, which, inſtead of being warranted by *a divine revelation*, falling under the cenſure of their own reaſon, could not be the ſource of a rational hope. All ſuch hope muſt be derived from the conſideration of God's eſſential goodneſs and mercy, the indulgent diſpenſations of his providence, and the teſtimony of conſcience to the ſincerity of their deſire, to know and do the will of their ſupreme Lord.

Sect.

Sect. XXXVII. *Obſ.* 7. *Though the character of the heathen world be no real objection againſt the certainty of a future ſtate, in which ſincere piety ſhall have its reward; yet that nothing which hath the face of an objection may be left unanſwered, I ſhall ſhew that the Heathens have been greatly miſrepreſented in this author's account of them.* This propoſition conſiſts of *two parts:* The firſt is, That the character of the Heathens, let it have been never ſo bad, is no real objection againſt the certainty of a future ſtate, in which ſincere piety ſhall have its reward. The queſtion is, Whether all men are not under ſome law, as the rule of their actions, obeying which, in a manner ſuitable to the capacities and opportunities which God hath given them, they ſhall be entitled to a future recompence? This is the queſtion; and not whether men do actually live according to this law. It is, I think, too plain to admit of diſpute, that men are oblig'd to do no more than they can, and ſhall be accountable only for what they have receiv'd; that God will accept the will for the deed, if they have what can be truly call'd the will, though no more; and more imperfect virtues, where thoſe that are more perfect are out of their reach. The Saviour of the world hath authoriz'd us to reaſon after this manner, when he makes the meaſure of God's

God's gifts to men, the rule of his judicial proceedings with them, *Luke* xii. 47, 48. And ſo far all mankind, whether enjoying a *revelation* or not, are upon an equal foot; the duty of every man being this, to uſe the light and ſtrength which he hath. And if one man is in a better condition than another on this account, that he hath more light and ſtrength afforded him, it is expected that he ſhould behave more exactly, and abound more in good works. Nay; I do not know but he who hath moſt is moſt blameable, if his good actions have not a greater proportion to his greater abilities than the others to his leſs; *i. e.* he that hath *five talents*, and lets them lie dead and unimploy'd, or imploys them wrong, is more culpable than he who does the ſame by his *two*; and *this* than a *third*, who buries his *one talent* in the earth. The reaſon is, that the temptations which men are under from the irregular propenſities of nature, though *abſolutely*, or *in themſelves*, the ſame to *all*, muſt *relatively* be moſt dangerous to thoſe who have leaſt light to diſcern the evil of them, and leaſt ſtrength to reſiſt and ſubdue them. The degree of knowledge and influence may be ſo *encreas'd*, on the one hand, that it ſhall be next to impoſſible to act wrong, how violent ſoever the evil inclination may be; or ſo *leſſen'd*, on the other, that there may be the greateſt hazard

hazard imaginable of mens not acting right: Which I take notice of to ſhew, that the common expreſſion of mens *living up to the light they enjoy*, does not mean altogether the ſame thing when applied to *Heathens* and *Chriſtians*; the latter of whom have leſs to plead in excuſe for their ſinful omiſſions and commiſſions, though not greater in proportion to the light and grace of the *goſpel*, than thoſe of the former in proportion to the light and ſtrength vouchſafed them; becauſe there is more likelihood of a man's receiving a leſs degree of grace in vain, than a greater. The *omniſcient God* knows all the advantages and diſadvantages of every one's condition; and the *merciful God* will make nothing elſe a neceſſary qualification for his favour than ſuch a determination of the will to that which is good, as is agreeable to the *degree of its liberty*, all circumſtances conſider'd, and would be more full, if that liberty was more entire.

Sect. XXXVIII. Does not the *prophet* ſay, He hath ſhew'd thee, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? This is what God hath ſhewn man, and what he requires of man, *as man*; and very reaſonable it is he ſhould do the things that are required, if he can; as, to be ſure he can,

can, becauſe it is not a *capricious tyrant* who requires them, but *God*, a moſt wiſe and gracious Being, who can never require impoſſibilities. Were ſuch things required; to the queſtion, *What does the Lord thy God require of thee?* It might be anſwer'd, Why, he requires that which he knows to be impoſſible; and, What could he require worſe? The *Apoſtle Paul* declares the Heathens to have been without excuſe: I hope, not for doing what they could not help; for going aſtray, when they had no light to direct them better; or for breaking commands which they were not able to keep. A gracious God would not have given them up to a *reprobate mind* for this. It muſt therefore be ſaid, that if the Heathens were *to every good work reprobate*, it was entirely their own fault; and being ſo, what if the *greater part* of them, what if *all* were become filthy and abominable? Does their *wickedneſs* make void the *goodneſs* of God? No more than the *unbelief* of the *Jews*, in our Saviour's time, made his *truth* of none effect. There never was ſo univerſal a depravity as that before the *flood:* Shall we therefore argue, that all but *Noah* and his family were *without any hope* of future rewards? *As wicked*, indeed, they were; and ſo are all *wicked Chriſtians*; but they were not *without hope*, that if they turned from their wicked ways they ſhould live; I may ſay,

ſay, they were not without *aſſurance*, that if they, or any of them, had been as virtuous as they were wicked, they ſhould have been accepted of God in this world, and rewarded by him in the next; as is plain from hence, that they were *the ſons of God*, or thoſe that conſtituted his church at that time, that were degenerated as well as others: So that even an *univerſal corruption* is no proof that men have not the knowledge of a ſtate of recompences, or the means of knowing it, and preparing for it. Was not the *Jewiſh church*, in ſome ages of it, overrun with vice and idolatry, ſo as to leave no diſcernable difference between the *vineyard of the Lord*, and the *common wilderneſs* of the world? The ſame may be obſerv'd of the *Chriſtian church* for whole ages together. But was it, therefore, leſs certain in thoſe times than in others, that *it ſhall be well with the righteous, and that the reward of his hands ſhall be given him?*

Sect. XXXIX. For any thing, then, which the character of the *heathen world* will prove to the contrary, the evidence from reaſon of a ſtate of recompences after death may be very compleat; I had almoſt ſaid, even though they had been as bad as our author hath been pleas'd to repreſent them; who ſaith, * "It will be very dif-"ficult for the greateſt admirers of the

* Page 303.

Heathens

" Heathens to tell, where to find *one* ſingle " man among them, who upon the largeſt " ſtretch of charity (you muſt underſtand it of our Author's, which when ſtretch'd to the utmoſt, if we may judge of it by this Inſtance, ſeems to be exceeding ſcanty) " can be thought to be tolerably diſpos'd " for a future ſtate of rewards.* —If Hea- " thens had been able to prove a future " ſtate of rewards for repenting ſinners, " they would not have been able to find " above *four* or *five* ſuch repenting ſinners, " if they could find *one* at all." But if *four* or *five*, why not four or five hundred, or a thouſand? *&c.* " No, as there was " not at beſt one man in fifty millions that " repented of idolatry, the unnatural and " other ſins, ſo there would not be above a " dozen, or a ſcore advanc'd to happineſs.†" To ſuppoſe, there might be *four* or *five* repenting ſinners in the whole heathen world, is, it ſeems, a *very great* ſtretch of charity; and that there might be a *dozen*, or a *ſcore*, is the *largeſt* that can be. It may be ſo, if our author ſpeaks only of himſelf; but, I believe there are many, among whom, I profeſs my ſelf one, whoſe charity, without any ſtretching, will extend a great deal farther than this. I can't gueſs by what rule this *charitable Gentleman* forms his calculation. He does not, I believe, pretend

* Page 304. † Page 305.

to a *particular revelation* in this matter; or to have been *contemporary* with all the ages, and an inhabitant of all the regions and countries, of the world. And, as for the acquaintance we have with diſtant times and nations by *hiſtory*, it will go but a very little way: not one name in many millions of thoſe that have liv'd upon earth being come down to us. And he muſt have no ordinary degree of ſagacity who from theſe few can make a judgment of all the reſt, to a *dozen* or a *ſcore* at moſt. God forbid, we ſhould exerciſe as little charity in judging each other, as Mr. *Hallett* does in paſſing ſentence on the *whole Pagan world*. The beſt of it is, by ſuch raſh and ſevere judgments, we can hurt none but our ſelves. Not to enter upon the vindication of *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, and others, of the two firſt of whom, he ſays, ſome (I know not who) talk as *ſaints*, and he ſpeaks as worſe than *brute-beaſts*; not to ſay more in anſwer to the aſperſions caſt upon theſe men than what may be thrown into a marginal note *, becauſe the

* In the place referr'd to by Mr. *Hallett*, there are theſe two lines of *Euripides*:

Αλλ' εςι δη τις αλλος εν βροτοις ερως
Ψυχης δικαιας σωφρονος τε καγαθης,

which, being quoted by *Plutarch* as expreſſing what *Socrates*, *Plato*, and the reſt intended, is plain demonſtration that the love

the controverſy doth not turn upon the good or bad character of any particular perſons; I would only aſk, whether Mr. *H*—— believes the beſt men in the ſight of God have been thoſe whoſe memory is conſecrated in hiſtory? whether true virtue does not oftener love the ſhade? and paſs thro' the world in a manner unknown to it? and if known to it, yet is not ſo much eſteem'd, as ſome other talents and qualities, by thoſe who take upon them

love they meant was of the intellectual kind (from *Plato* ſtyl'd *Platonick*) not that abominable vice which they are here charg'd with patronizing. And if they had regard to the beauty of the body, it was becauſe they look'd on that as an indication of the amiable qualities of the mind. Accordingly, the ſame author, in his life of *Alcibiades*, ſaith, that the affection which *Socrates* expreſs'd for him, was a great evidence of his virtue and good diſpoſition, which *Socrates* perceiv'd to ſhine thro' the beauty of his perſon; and fearing leſt his wealth and quality, and the great number both of ſtrangers and *Athenians*, who flatter'd and careſs'd him, might at laſt corrupt him, he reſolv'd to interpoſe, and take care to preſerve ſo hopeful a plant from periſhing in the flower.——And again, *Alcibiades* had a particular affection and reverence for *Socrates*, obſerving that his diſcourſes aim'd not at any effeminate pleaſures of love, any thing wanton and *diſhoneſt*, but at the correction and improvement of his manners. Which made *Cleanthes* ſay, He had given his ears to *Socrates*, and to his rivals other parts of his body, which *Socrates* would not meddle with.

Tho' I do not ſuppoſe Mr. *H*—— would *knowingly* bring a falſe accuſation againſt theſe excellent men, on no other ſcore but that of their being *Heathens* (this being too near a-kin to that *popiſh maxim*, that faith is not to be kept with hereticks) yet, perhaps, he himſelf, on reflexion, may be ſenſible, that he was too haſty in thinking and ſpeaking evil of them, and that what made him ſo, was a ſecret prejudice againſt them for ſtanding in the way of his hypotheſis.

to tranſmit names and characters to poſterity, and to aſſign the value they ſhall bear? for my own part, I make no doubt, but the great *day of revelation* will furniſh numberleſs inſtances of the truth of that ſaying, *Qui bene latuit, bene vixit*, in a nobler ſenſe than was intended by the poet.

Sect. XL. This author having painted *that* a vaſt deal blacker, which was but too black before, I hope I ſhall not give any juſt occaſion of offence, if I turn *advocate* for the *accuſed*; not in oppoſition to the *Apoſtle Paul*, every tittle of whoſe charge againſt them I am ready to ſubſcribe to; but to Mr. *Hallett*, who ſetting up for the *Apoſtle*'s interpreter, hath plainly miſtook his meaning, and aggravated things beyond all truth and charity; as I perſuade my ſelf any unprejudic'd perſon will be convinc'd, after he hath duly conſider'd, what may be pleaded in favour of the *Heathens*; *firſt*, as to the *corruption of their manners in general*; and *then*, as to the *crime of idolatry, in particular*. As to the corruption and degeneracy of their manners, it muſt be acknowledg'd, that St. *Paul*, in ſeveral places of his *Epiſtles*, particularly in the *firſt chapter* of the *Epiſtle to the* Romans, hath given them ſuch a character, as none can deſerve without forfeiting all claim to the mercy of God,

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and favourable opinion of their fellow-creatures. But are we to think, that the charge brought againſt the heathen world by this *inſpired writer* was deſigned to include every individual? that all of them, without exception, were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins? This is not credible of a ſingle age or nation, and much leſs of all nations and all ages, that of the many *thouſand millions* who had been without a *revelation* till the *coming of Chriſt*, and that have been ſo ſince, *none* have been *real lovers of virtue.* This, I ſay, is not credible on any other hypotheſis than *that* of their being under an *invincible ignorance* of their duty, or an *irreſiſtible determination* to act contrary to it; which would prove that there was more reaſon why they ſhould complain, than be complain'd of. But not to inſiſt on this; there are *two conſiderations*, among many others, which ſhew that the Apoſtle's intention was only to deſcribe the *general ſtate* of things, or what the Heathens were, conſider'd in one maſs, not in reſpect of every particular perſon.

Sect. XLI. The *firſt* is, that his account of the *Jewiſh nation*, in the *ſecond* and *third chapters* of the *Epiſtle to the* Romans, is little better than of the *Gentiles* in the *firſt*, if we except *idolatry.* And as to their being clear of that, the advantage they

had of a revelation makes their other ſins more than a balance to thoſe of the Heathens, with that thrown into the ſcale. If we do not underſtand what the *Pſalmiſt* ſays of the wickedneſs of the times he liv'd in as meant (incluſively at leaſt) of the *Jewiſh people* at that time, as the *Apoſtle* ſeems to give us authority to do, *Rom.* iii. 9, and 19. yet, by citing thoſe paſſages in a diſcourſe concerning the corruption of that people in the *Goſpel age*, he plainly intimates that this deſcription did *then* generally fit them; and if ſo, the *Gentiles* could not well overmatch them; for they were *all gone out of the way, there was none that did good, no not one.* This people were ſome ages before ſtyl'd, *the people, and the generation of God's wrath*, Iſa. x. 6. Jer.vii. 29. expreſſions very like, if not equivalent, to that, *Eph.* ii. 3. ſignifying their being the objects of God's diſpleaſure, on account of their abounding wickedneſs. So that, unleſs from the indefiniteneſs of the charge we have a mind to conclude, that the *Jews* were univerſally corrupt, without the reſerve of a ſelect number (in which we ſhould contradict what the *ſacred hiſtory* ſaith of *Zecharias* and *Elizabeth*, *Simeon*, *Anna*, with others that *looked for redemption in* Iſrael) we have no reaſon to think that the *Gentiles* had no examples of real virtue to produce. Without qualifying the Apoſtle's manner of expreſſing

preſſing himſelf, we muſt ſay, that the *profeſſors of Chriſtianity* were univerſally declin'd from their firſt love; ſince *all ſought their own, not the things of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. ii. 21. The truth is, the *Apoſtle*'s deſign in this deſcription of the ſtate of the world, both the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* parts of it, doth not require that we ſhould take him thus rigorouſly; his aim being *principally*, if not only, to evince the neceſſity of the *Goſpel diſpenſation and covenant*; which he does by taking a view of mankind, among whom the depravity was ſo great and extenſive, that the time when God ſent his Son into the world might be call'd the *fullneſs of time*, with regard to the need there was of his coming, (as well as upon other accounts) and of an extraordinary grace and mercy, that ſuch heinous and abandon'd ſinners might be juſtified and reform'd. When men were fallen into ſo deplorable a condition, through their own inexcuſable abuſe of the *opportunities* and *motives* which God had given them to *know* and *do* his will, the *doctrines* of *juſtification* by faith in Chriſt, and of *ſanctification* by his Goſpel and Spirit, ought to be exceeding acceptable to them. On the firſt of theſe the *Apoſtle* inſiſts, *Rom.* i. 16, 17. *Rom.* iii. 9, and 19. and following Verſes; and *Gal.* iii. 22. and puts both together, 1 *Cor.* vi. 11.

And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God. It is here worth our obſervation, that the *Apoſtle* having in the *ninth* and *tenth* verſes given a catalogue of very great ſinners who ſhould not *inherit the kingdom of God*, when he makes the application to the *Corinthians*, ſays only, *And ſuch were* ſome, *not* all, *of you*; in which he does ſecretly allow that there were men of integrity among them, whoſe characters were not ſtain'd with any of the vices here mentioned. To proceed; This being the Apoſtle's deſign, to prove the neceſſity of the Goſpel, for the juſtification and renovation of a ſinful world, to the conviction of all, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that were capable of being convinc'd, he abundantly made good his point, if it appear'd they were both ſunk into the deepeſt corruption of manners, tho' ſome rare Inſtances might be found of ſincere, but, comparatively ſpeaking, very imperfect, goodneſs and religion, before the opening of the *evangelical diſpenſation*. This is the *firſt conſideration* which ſhews that there is no neceſſity of underſtanding St. *Paul*'s character of the heathen world as including every particular perſon among them.

Sect. XLII. The *other conſideration* follows, *viz.* that from divers places of *Scripture* we have ground to infer the contrary; or that the Heathens were not without examples of virtue and religion among them. When St. *Peter* ſaith, that *in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him*; he, not obſcurely, hints that there were ſome who did fear God and work righteouſneſs, though of pagan extraction; of which *Cornelius* and the *devout ſoldier that waited on him* were two inſtances among many. Thus in the ſecond to the *Romans*, St. *Paul* ſaith, *That God will render to every man according to his deeds, not only tribulation to them that do evil, but glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the* Jew *firſt, and alſo to the* Gentile, *for there is no reſpect of Perſons with God*, ver. 10, 11. and would the *Apoſtle* put ſuch a ſuppoſition as this, if among the *Gentiles* there were none who did good? it may be thought that this is only meant of ſuch *Gentiles* as had embraced Chriſtianity. But this cannot be, becauſe in the next *verſe* he adds, *that as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law*, i. e. *Gentiles* not yet converted to chriſtianity; of whom therefore he muſt have ſpoken in the *verſe* before. And in the 26th *verſe* of the ſame *Chapter*, he ſuppoſes that the *Gentiles*, whom he calls the

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uncircumciſion, might fulfil the righteouſneſs of the Law, or the *moral part* of it, which was coincident with the *law of reaſon*, in doing which, he tells the *Jews*, they would condemn them, who, while they made their boaſt of the law, were found tranſgreſſors of it, *verſe* 27. Some other inſtances will fall in under the head of *idolatry*, to which I now paſs on.

Sect. XLIII. Here our Author puſhes the Heathens with the greateſt vigor, and having, as he thinks, quite overthrown them, triumphs moſt unmercifully. A paſſage or two ſhall ſerve for a ſample. " Perhaps there was not *one in a million* " among the Heathens, perhaps not *one at* " *all** that was free from this inexcuſable ſin " of idolatry, that repented of and forſook it: " and ſo there was not one in a million, if " one at all, that could poſſibly entertain " any *reaſonable* hopes of a future ſtate of " bliſs †." —" Before the coming of our " Saviour, all the nations of the earth, ex- " cepting the one very ſmall nation of the " *Jews*, lived in the practice of ſins incon- " ſiſtent with ſalvation, and particularly in " the ſin of idolatry, without repentance." As much as to ſay, *all* were guilty, not one in a million, perhaps, not one in the whole number, excepted ‖; the ſin they were guilty of was the *worſt of ſins*, and without

* Page 301. † Page 367. ‖ Page 301.

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repentance (that is, *a particular repentance*) inconſiſtent with ſalvation, and with God's receiving ſuch *monſtrous* ſinners to his favour *; and of this ſin (if our Author's word may be taken) they none of them repented. A very ſhort, and ſummary trial, indeed! without giving himſelf the trouble to examine whether there might not be ſome *innocent perſons* hid in the crowd of *offenders*, or ſo much as entertaining a charitable ſuſpicion that there might, or diſtinguiſhing between the degrees of guilt, he diſpatches them at once. 'Tis however kind of him that he ſeems to content himſelf with a *negative* puniſhment, and the kinder becauſe the crime was ſo *inexcuſable* and *monſtrouſly* great, even the *worſt* of all ſins, which, one would have thought, might have deſerv'd a ſeverer penalty than bare annihilation. Let us now ſee, whether nothing can be offer'd to mollify this charge.

Sect. XLIV. I ſhall begin with obſerving that the word *God* may be taken in different ſenſes; the two moſt eminent of which are, *firſt, a Being ſelf-exiſtent, independent, and all-perfect, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things*, in the language of *Inſpiration:* the *other*, of *a Being made by mankind the object of religious worſhip.* In the *firſt ſenſe*, the World, in the moſt un-

* Page 304.

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cultivated ſtate of *reaſon*, and under all the corruptions of *religion*, hath ever acknowledged but one God. " In this irreconcila-
" ble war, and vaſt variety of opinions,
" you may perceive this to be the uniform
" law and opinion of the whole earth, that
" there is *one God*, *the King*, *and Father of*
" *all*, and that the many other Gods, are
" only the *ſons of God*, and admitted to a
" ſhare in the empire with him. In this,
" the *Greek* agrees with the *Barbarian*, the
" *Mediterranean* with the *Iſlander*, the
" *wiſe man* with the *unlearned* [a]." This *one God*, is by *Antiſthenes* ſtyl'd *Deus naturalis*, in oppoſition to the *populares dii*; theſe gods of the people, ſaith he, are many, while there is but *one God by nature* [b]. What light this affords to that of the *Apoſtle*, *Gal.* iv. 3. I need not take notice. This God they call'd the *God of gods* [c], on whom all thoſe other deities depend which we adore and worſhip [d]. The *forming God* [e], the *ſupreme God*, who made the univerſe, the governor of all things, yet inviſible, in whom is every thing beautiful and good [f], the *firſt Cauſe*, and the *almighty God*, according to *Macrobius* [g], who farther, moſt judiciouſly obſerves, " That the univerſe is rightly

[a] Max. Tyr. Diſſert. 1. [b] Cicer. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. ſ. 13. [c] Hier. in Carm. Pythag. Dan. 2. 47. [d] Sen. [e] Hier. [f] Xen. Memorab. l. 4. [g] Macrob. in Somn. ſcip.

" ſtyl'd

" ſtyl'd the *Temple of God*, on the account " of ſuch perſons as are ready to imagine, " that beſides the Heavens and the Lumi- " naries that adorn them, there is no other " God. For this reaſon *Scipio*, to expreſs the " omnipotence of the *ſupream God*, who " can ſcarcely be apprehended, *never ſeen*, " names the whole viſible world the Tem- " ple of that Being, who is only to be con- " ceiv'd by the mind; that he who vene- " rates theſe things under the notion of a " Temple, may yet be mindful to pay the " *chief worſhip* to the Builder, and that " every one who is introduc'd into this " Temple might regard himſelf as a Prieſt " in it." The *unity of God*, then (under- ſtanding the term in its higheſt and proper- eſt ſenſe) or the *Monarchy* (as *Lactantius* expreſſes it) was not unknown to the hea- then world; which ſhews our Author's miſtake, when he charges them with being ignorant of, or not believing in the one true and ſupreme God *, becauſe, ſaith he, they muſt then have neceſſarily thrown aſide their idols; which would be a good conſe- quence, if men had always reaſon'd juſtly, but will be own'd to be worth nothing, when it is conſider'd that men were become *vain in their imaginations*, before they grew mad upon their idols. Is there not a very great party in the *chriſtian world*, who while

* Page 310.

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they acknowledge but *one Mediator between God and man*, do yet, in effect, ſet up a multitude of mediators; nor are ſenſible of any inconſiſtency in their practice? it was not, therefore, for having baniſh'd the *notion* of *one ſupreme God* out of the world that the *Apoſtle Paul* condemn'd the Heathens as inexcuſable (which is not only the opinion of this Writer, but ſeems to have been ſo likewiſe of the learned Dr. *Clarke**) for they never had a plurality of ſelf-exiſtent, co-equal Gods, without a ſupreme head; tho', by the way, ſuppoſing them to have had ſo, they would not have been without excuſe, if, as the *Doctor* ſaith, the unity of God can no otherways be demonſtrated than by conſidering *a priori*, the nature of a neceſſary or ſelf-exiſtent cauſe; which is a way of proof that a great many learned men do not well apprehend, and is quite above the reach of the illiterate vulgar. St. *Paul* himſelf allows, that the true God was not altogether unknown to the Heathens, mentioning this as the greateſt aggravation of their guilt, that *when they knew God they glorified him not as God*, Rom. i. 21. They *knew* there was but *one God* properly ſo call'd; and yet impiouſly *gave his glory to others, and his praiſe to graven images*; and in this ſenſe had *gods many*,

* Letter concerning his argument *a priori*.

and

and *lords many*, to whom they addreſſed religious worſhip, and adoration.

Sect. XLV. Theſe *new-comers* were continually incroaching upon the rights and prerogatives of the *only living and true God*, till at length they had in a manner quite ſet aſide all memorials of him. Men firſt worſhipped the creature together *with* the Creator, then the creature *more* than the Creator, and in time proceeded to that height of ſacrilege, as to worſhip the creature *without* the Creator: I ſpeak of the forms of worſhip *publickly eſtabliſhed*. Temples were every where erected in honour of theſe *idol-deities*, while *the maker of heaven and earth*, had no place *where his name was recorded* but among the *Jews*. And this will ſufficiently explain the Apoſtle's meaning when he deſcribes the *Gentiles*, as *not knowing God*, and *without God in the world*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 5. *Eph.* ii. 12. Any one that ſhould have judged of them by their *publick acts and monuments of religion*, would have ſaid that *the ſupreme God was not in all their thoughts*. The religions profeſs'd in every country, could ſcarce have taken leſs notice of him, if there had been no ſuch Being. The God, beſides whom there is no other, might, in this reſpect, be properly enough call'd *the unknown God*, not being *openly* acknowledged by the nations of the earth; or his worſhip ſo confounded with that

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paid to the crowd of *nominal deities*, as not to be diſtinguiſhable from it. What interpretation will Mr. *H*—— give of that place, 2 *Chron.* xv. 3. *Now for a long ſeaſon Iſrael hath been without the true God.* Will he ſay, they were without the knowledge of the true God? or only without the pure and uncorrupted worſhip of him, and the marks of his ſpecial, favourable preſence among them? I preſume, he will ſay, the latter. And why then muſt expreſſions of a like kind have ſuch an aggravated ſenſe, when the *Heathens* are ſpoken of? *Our bleſſed Lord* tells the woman of *Samaria*, that they (the *Samaritans*) *worſhipped they knew not what*, becauſe, as they had a leſs perfect *rule of worſhip* than the *Jews*, ſo they *worſhipped the father in that mountain, and not at Jeruſalem*, the place appointed by God himſelf. How much more then might the *heathen world* be ſaid not to know whom they worſhip'd, when their eſtabliſh'd worſhips were over-run with the groſſeſt idolatry? tho', ſtrictly ſpeaking, they were not without all knowledge of a ſupreme Being, who preſided as chief in the affairs of the univerſe.

Sect. XLVI. The enquiry concerning *the origin and progreſs of Idolatry* belongs not to this place. And yet I cannot forbear obſerving, with how much pleaſure, and how little juſtice, ſome men throw the whole

whole blame upon the *prieſthood*; not caring what becomes of all of that Order, ſo the *laity* be not involved in the ſame condemnation, whoſe greateſt fault, as they pretend, was their blind obedience to the ſacerdotal Tribe *. The Scripture attributes this miſchievous invention to *falſe philoſophy*. The profeſſors of wiſdom were the firſt fools in this kind, *Rom.* i. 22. and through the abundance of their own conceited wiſdom *knew not God*, ſo as to worſhip him *only*, and *in a manner worthy of him*; by their vain reaſonings introducing *the uſe of images*, and the cuſtom of applying to certain *middle powers* between man and the ſupreme God. It was, according to *Cicero* †, *conſilio quodam ſapientum*, by the advice of wiſe men, that the gods were firſt repreſented in *human ſhape*, *quo facilius animos imperitorum ad Deorum cultum a vitæ pravitate converterent*, that they might the more eaſily allure the minds

* Quum ſacra illa rituſq; ſacerdotum prorſus inventa fuere, non in Gentiles qui dicto audientes fuerint, ſed in eorum Antiſtites heic culpa redundare debeat. Sacerdotes autem non minus ſuperſtitiones idololatriamq; invexiſſe, quam rixas contentioneſq; ubiq; gentium ſeruiſſe, nulli dubium eſſe arbitror. Quapropter de *Laicorum Gentilium* ſtatu futuro haut ita temere decerni oportere, ac Theologis quibuſdam viſum eſt, facile mihi perſuaderi patior; quum nihil eorum vitio magis verti poſſet; quam quod authoritati Pontificum ſuorum ſacerdotaliq; collegio ſemet totos ſubjecerint. *Ld. Herbert de Relig. Gentil.*

† Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. 1. ſ. 27.

of the rude vulgar to religion. That the *Prieſts* were not thoſe who firſt led mankind aſtray is evident from hence, that the *Prieſtly* and *Kingly* offices were originally united in the ſame perſon *. And if this *royal Prieſt*, the better to ſerve his ſecular ends, made the influence he had as Prieſt to conſpire with his authority as King, in corrupting the ſimplicity of religion with ſuch innovations as he pleas'd, theſe changes are not to be put to the account of Prieſt, but lay craft. After theſe two functions came to be divided, the eccleſiaſtical power was but a creature of the civil, and under its controul and direction. *Jeroboam* was not the only Prince who made gods, and prieſts to ſerve them, at his pleaſure. The ſame thing was practis'd every where by thoſe who had the ſupreme command. 'Tis true the laity having by degrees in great meaſure play'd the game out of their own hands, the Prieſts had cunning enough to make their advantage of it, and by imaginary terrors held the world (and many times thoſe that ſet them up, as well as others) in a ſort of bondage. But then this was not till long after idolatry had gain'd a ſettlement, and the monſter *Superſtition*, however firſt begot, was not only compleatly lap'd, but nurs'd up to an immenſe ſize,

* Rex Anius, Rex idem hominum Phœbiq; ſacerdos. Virgil.

by

by the arts of *politicians*, the fictions of *poets*, and the fears of the *vulgar*; to all which the *ſecular power* adding its ſanction eſtabliſh'd error in the dominion which it had uſurp'd over mankind. To return, now, from this digreſſion.

Sect. XLVII. Tho' it be confeſs'd, that the *heathen religions* were all of them idolatrous; yet will not this come up to Mr. *Hallett*'s purpoſe, ſince particular perſons were no farther accountable for eſtabliſh'd errors than by criminal compliances they made them their own. If there were any who ſwam againſt the ſtream, and, in the general defection from the worſhip of the one true God, preſerv'd their allegiance to him, inſtead of deſerving blame and puniſhment for the idolatry of others, which they could not help, they became worthy of the greater commendation for their own diſſent. And of ſuch, we may ſuppoſe, there were never wanting ſome, as the number was, in ſome ages, very conſiderable. In the days of *Abraham*, when idolatry had overſpread the earth, all were not tainted with the infection; for, not to mention *Melchiſedek*, *who was prieſt of the moſt high God*; *Abimelech*, *King of* Gerar, ſeems to have been likewiſe a ſervant and worſhipper of the ſame God, and this in the midſt of *idolaters*, as may be gather'd from *Abraham*'s ſuſpicion that *the*

fear of God, or the true religion, *was not in that place*; which ſuſpicion he could found upon nothing elſe but the prevalency of idolatry at that time, *Gen.* xx. 11. at *Zarephath*, a city of *Zidon*, and conſequently heathen, there was a poor widow who believed in the true God, and by her readineſs to follow *Elijah*'s directions in making a cake of the handful of meal ſhe had remaining, before ſhe and her ſon had eaten of it, approv'd the ſtrength of her faith. God ſo determines it in his providence, that this woman hath the honour of entertaining the prophet in a time of famine, preferably to any of the widows that were in *Iſrael*, 1 *Kings* xvii. 8, *&c.* which *our Saviour* himſelf takes particular notice of, *Luke* iv. 25. I might produce *Jethro*, *Moſes*'s father-in-law, *Naaman* the *Syrian*, the *Centurion*, and the *Eunuch*, treaſurer to queen *Candace*. But we need not be ſolicitous about particular inſtances, when in the *ſacred hiſtory* we find there were great numbers of this character. At the departure of the *children of* Iſrael out of *Egypt*, there was a mixed multitude that went up with them, *Exod.* xii. 38. who, convinc'd by the miracles which had been wrought in the land of *Egypt*, turned from dumb idols to ſerve the living God; yet without making profeſſion of the *Jewiſh* religion;

it

it being probable that theſe, or ſome of them, and their deſcendants, are to be reckon'd among thoſe *ſtrangers*, or *proſelytes of the gate*, concerning whom the law of *Moſes* gives ſeveral directions. *Solomon*, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, recommends the caſe of the *ſtranger*, who, not being of the *people of Iſrael*, ſhould come and pray towards that houſe; for, ſaith he, they ſhall hear of thy great name, and of thy ſtrong hand, and thy ſtretched out arm, 1 *Kings* viii. 41—43. Theſe are the σεβομενοι, the *devout Greeks*, or *Gentiles*, mention'd in the *New Teſtament*, of whom in the ſingle city of *Theſſalonica* there was *a great multitude*, Acts xvii. 4. Of theſe, ſuch as were conveniently ſituated for it, went at certain times to *Jeruſalem*, there to worſhip God in the outer court of the temple, which was left free to them, *John* xii. 20. or frequented the *Jewiſh ſynagogues* in other towns, *Acts* xiv. 1. *Acts* xviii. 4. Notwithſtanding which, they were to be eſteem'd *Gentiles* ſtill, having only renounc'd Idolatry, and practiſing no more of the *Jewiſh* religion than one *uncircumcis'd* might do. And there is reaſon to think, that among the *Heathens* who had not the ſame opportunities of joining in worſhip with the *Jews* at their temple and ſynagogues, many were

to be found of the ſame principles; and, perhaps, when *Horace* * hints at the frequent converſions made by the *Jews*, he hath his eye chiefly to ſuch perſons as were drawn off by them from the idolatry of the *Romans*. Theſe might, properly enough, be ſtyl'd *the diſperſed among the* Gentiles; which, poſſibly, may be the meaning of the expreſſion, *John* vii. 36. *And the children of God ſcatter'd abroad. John* xi. 52. worſhipping *one God the Father*, of whom are all things; by which they were more immediately prepar'd to become *the children of God* by adoption into the *Chriſtian church*. The firſt converts to the Goſpel, from among the *Gentiles*, were of this number, *Acts* xiii. 43. *Acts* xiv. 1. *Acts* xvii. 4.

Sect. XLVIII. Beſides *theſe*, who *abſented* from the idol-temples, there might be *others* who went thither, being the only places of publick worſhip to which they could go, to avoid the imputation of irreligion and atheiſm, not partaking, any otherwiſe than by their bare preſence, in what was done there. A *third ſort*, when they pray'd before images, might not imagine that the τὸ θεῖον, the divinity, was *like to gold, or ſilver, or ſtone, graven by art*,

* ——— Ac veluti te
Judæi cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.
L. 1. *Sat.* 4.

and

and man's device; and if they made their addreſſes to inferior deities, might only do it as to *mediators* between them and *the God over all.* And, tho' this was uncommanded, and therefore unjuſtifiable; yet, I fancy, we ſhould ſtretch the matter too far to pronounce them, for this reaſon, in a ſtate of damnation. Yea, I do not ſee, why we may not have charity for *thoſe who were ſunk yet deeper into idolatry*; provided they were *honeſt-minded*, and did not ſo much want integrity of heart, as a clearer knowledge of divine things; there being great likelihood that ſuch as theſe had a confus'd notion of a power ſuperior to their idols, which exercis'd and communicated it ſelf, they knew not how, by, and thro' them; ſo as that their higheſt regard, and chief praiſes were due to the God and Father of all. And, in this caſe, whatever others may do, I dare not ſay, that the ſin of theſe men was ſo great and heinous as not to be pardonable without *a particular repentance.* That paſſage of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* i. 18. is more to the purpoſe of this argument than is obvious at firſt view; *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.* The fundamental principles of religion, or the *common notions*, concerning the *unity of God*, as an object

of worſhip, his *holineſs*, *the purity of the ſervice* demanded by him, *a governing providence*, and *a future account*, were ſo ſtifled and fetter'd by the corrupt affections of a great part of mankind, as not to be diſtinctly perceiv'd by the mind it ſelf, or diſcoverable by others in the outward actions, any more than if there were no ſuch principles of truth exiſting. Idolatry then (at leaſt *that* which the ſcripture calls *abominable idolatry*, 1 Pet. iv. 3. being attended with lewdneſs, cruelty, and exceſs of riot, and ſo capable of no apology) was the ſin only of the unrighteous and ungodly, in whom *the candle of the Lord* was extinguiſhed by luſt, while to others, who did not thus hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs, being lovers of the things that are good and true, truth diſcover'd it ſelf ſo far as to prevent their falling into *deſtructive errors*, and to ſcreen them from the wrath of God reveal'd from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs of men. From hence it follows, that as many as there were among the Heathens ſincerely deſirous of knowing and doing their duty (who were all known unto God) ſo many were there, either *wholly pure* from idolatry, or undefil'd by that *ſort* and *degree* of it, for which there was no pardon without a *particular repentance*. I would farther take this occaſion to mind Mr. *Hallett*, that he did not ſpeak with

with all that guard he ought to have done, when he ſaid, that, perhaps, not one of the Heathens repented of his idolatry. Does he really think that none who had been engag'd in a wicked courſe of life ever repented of it, and became other men? If there were any ſuch, as no doubt there were, at the ſame time as they unfeignedly repented of their other vices, we may and muſt ſuppoſe them to repent of *that* idolatry, into which they had been led by their vicious inclinations, and by which, in return, their vicious inclinations had been encourag'd and ſtrengthen'd. I ſhall conclude this head with aſking Mr. *Hallett*, whether he does not think that the beſt proteſtant writers have prov'd idolatry on the *Church of* Rome? whether the idolatry of *Rome Chriſtian* be not leſs excuſable on ſome accounts than that of *Rome Pagan?* whether, yet, conſiderations might not be offer'd from the circumſtances of a great many in that communion, and the goodneſs of their intention, which ſhould keep a charitable Proteſtant from determining againſt the poſſibility, or even probability, of their ſalvation, without a particular repentance? and finally, whether many of the ſame alleviations may not be pleaded with the ſame, or greater ſtrength for the *leaſt guilty* among the idolatrous Heathens.

Sect.

Sect. XLIX. *Obſerv.* 8. *The* Jews, *before the coming of Chriſt, muſt be left without hope, as well as the* Gentiles, *if we are no more favourable in our interpretation of ſome paſſages in the New Teſtament which relate to them, than Mr.* H —— *is in giving the meaning of others that regard the Heathens; and go upon his principle, that no evidence is of weight in the preſent argument which falls ſhort of ſtrict demonſtration.* That what the *Apoſtle* ſaith, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. includes the *Jews*, together with the *Gentiles*, is evident from the plain oppoſition of the *Goſpel* to the *Law*, in the 7th verſe, compar'd with *Rom.* viii. 15. and from the light which one part of the Apoſtle's aſſertion lends to the other; for, ſince Chriſt's *aboliſhing death* moſt probably ſignifies his redeeming us from it by the ſacrifice of the croſs, in oppoſition to the methods of atonement under former diſpenſations, particularly, the *legal*; *his bringing life and immortality to light by the Goſpel*, muſt conſequently denote the clearneſs of the Goſpel revelation, in oppoſition to *the ſhadows of good things to come*, which the *Law* exhibited, as well as to the diſcoveries of natural reaſon; not to aſk, with what propriety our Saviour could be ſaid to *bring life and immortality to light by the Goſpel*, if the *Goſpel* made little or no addition to the light which they enjoy'd who liv'd

liv'd under the *Law*? In this caſe, he did not ſo truly bring the object to light, as make that light more univerſal, which was before confin'd to a ſmall corner of the earth. The ſame Apoſtle, if he was the author of the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, doth in the 9th *chapter* of that epiſtle, *ver.* 8. aſſert, that *the way into the holy of holies* (or into the heaven of the bleſſed) *was not made manifeſt while the firſt tabernacle was ſtanding*, which makes him call it a *new way*, *Heb.* x. 20. Should we underſtand theſe and other places without any limitation, it might be ſaid, that the *Jews* had hope only in this life. If, on the contrary, they are taken *comparatively* (as for certain they ought to be) and imply no more than a higher degree of evidence for the ſame thing; it is but reaſonable that we ſhould follow the ſame rule in ſettling the ſenſe of thoſe places which ſpeak of the *Gentiles*.

Sect. L. Was it ever pretended that the *Jews* had *expreſs promiſes* of future and eternal rewards? or does our *author* himſelf believe that their *typical adumbrations* of theſe things had all the certainty that could be deſir'd? or that theſe, or any other arguments to be collected from their *ſacred books*, would have given the ſatisfaction they did, had they not been explain'd and ſupported by the atteſtation

which

which reaſon gave to the ſame truths? The argument which our *bleſſed Saviour* makes uſe of againſt the *Sadducees*, ſeems to have been entirely new, or unthought of before; for 'tis ſaid, *When the multitude heard this, they were aſtoniſh'd at his doctrine*, Matt. xxii. 32. and being new, it could not, how concluſive ſoever, have been very obvious. Nor, I fancy (if we ſet aſide the conſideration of Chriſt's having ſtamp'd it with his authority) ſhall we find many who would allow this proof, as it lies in the *Old Teſtament*, to be a ſtrict demonſtration. An *high probability* it may juſtly paſs for; but *probability*, according to Mr. *Hallett*, ſinks into *mere poſſibility*, as ſoon as we begin to build upon it. Had the books of *Moſes* contain'd any ſuch diſcoveries of a future ſtate as were clear and demonſtrative, it is hardly credible ſo conſiderable a ſect as the *Sadducees* ſhould have had the face, at the ſame time that they acknowledg'd the authority of theſe books, to deny any ſuch ſtate; or that they ſhould have paſs'd without publick cenſure, and much more that they ſhould have gain'd ſo much authority in the *Jewiſh* commonwealth. It muſt be own'd that the doctrine of immortality is more frequently and ſtrongly deliver'd in ſome of the other books of the *Old Teſtament*, particularly in the *prophets*.

phets. But ſtill the proof which the *Jewiſh revelation* ſupplies, when ſeparated from the rational evidence on which it is built; and, eſpecially, when compar'd with the ſuperior light of the Goſpel, was very incompleat, and eaſily evaded by perſons not diſpos'd to receive the truth; who would be ready to object, that the *Law of* Moſes, which was the *original foundation* of their faith and hope, having promis'd only temporal bleſſings, whatever paſſages, in the *ſcriptures*, wrote long after this, ſeem'd to look farther, were to have their ſenſe reſtrain'd by the plain letter of the law. That the prophets made uſe of a warm and figurative ſtyle, in order to rouſe the attention, and ſtrike the paſſions of their hearers; and that, therefore, no great ſtreſs can be laid on thoſe predictions and repreſentations, which, in ſtrictneſs of language, could not receive their accompliſhment in this life, ſince even in theſe they might intend no more than an uncommon meaſure of temporal felicity, and ſurprizing diſplays of providence in their deliverance from outward calamities. Thus would ill-minded men among the *Jews* have been apt to reaſon, if the *natural preſages and evidences* of a future ſtate had not help'd to fix the meaning of their *holy oracles*, which would have otherwiſe been of doubtful interpretation.

Sect.

Sect. LI. And why may not the cauſe, that ſo little is mention'd of future recompences in the *Old Teſtament*, and that little ſo indirectly expreſs'd, be *partly* taken from hence, that *reaſon hath ſaid ſo much?* and *partly* from the nature of the *Moſaic diſpenſation*, which, being deſign'd to ſeparate between the *Jews*, and other nations of the earth, only till a more perfect inſtitution ſhould be reveal'd and eſtabliſh'd by the *Meſſiah*, is therefore more ſparing in what concerns the rewards of another life, that they might not think the difference between them and other people was in things *eſſential*, and to laſt *for ever*, and that the honour of a full diſcovery of the *heavenly world* might be reſerv'd for that divine perſon, who was to deſcend from thence for this purpoſe, and when he came, might promiſe himſelf a more ready and joyful reception on this account? This, I think, does fairly ſolve the difficulty ariſing from the obſcurity of the *Jewiſh* revelation, in point of things unſeen and eternal, which, upon the principles of our author, I deſpair of ever ſeeing clear'd up.

Sect. LII. Being afraid that the *written revelation* of the *Jews* alone would hardly furniſh them with ſo clear a knowledge of unſeen recompences, as he ſuppoſes them to have had; he ſaith, 'tis likely they had promiſes

promiſes *vaſtly* more expreſs than the *hints* which are given in the Old Teſtament *. So that, according to himſelf we only meet with *hints* of eternal life in the Old Teſtament, ſo indeterminate and obſcure, as to be of little ſervice, without promiſes *vaſtly more expreſs*. That they had ſuch promiſes he thinks very likely; whereas I ſhould think it very likely that they had not. For would not ſuch expreſs promiſes have been by far the moſt valuable part of their revelation, and for that reaſon committed to *writing* for the greater ſecurity of the conveyance, and not left to the many accidents and variations which *tradition* is liable to? Give me leave to add, that the truth of promiſes, for which they had only *oral tradition* to vouch, might juſtly be queſtion'd; there being nothing to aſſure them that they were not deriv'd from the *hints of ſcripture*, join'd with their own reaſonings and wiſhes. I have, indeed, made the ſame obſervation, as he does, *p.* 376. that the mother and her ſeven ſons ſpeak much more plainly than any writer of the Old Teſtament; to which might be added other inſtances of a like nature, *Tobit* iii. 6. *Command that I may be deliver'd out of this diſtreſs, and go into the* everlaſting place. *Wiſd.* iii. 1—4. *The ſouls of the righteous are in the hand*

* Page 376.

of

of God; and there ſhall no torment touch them. In the ſight of the unwiſe they ſeemed to die; and their departure is taken for miſery, and their going from us to be utter deſtruction; but they are in peace; for tho' they be puniſh'd in the ſight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality.

Sect. LIII. It may ſeem ſurprizing, that when the *Jews had no more any prophet among them*, they ſhould expreſs their hopes of a glorious reſurrection, and happy immortality, in clearer and ſtronger terms, than *in the days of inſpiration.* Without having recourſe to ſo improbable a ſuppoſition as that of their being in poſſeſſion of divine promiſes of two kinds, *written* and *unwritten*, and that the unwritten were *vaſtly more expreſs* than the written ones; I ſhall endeavour to account for it in another, and more natural way, *viz.* by reſolving it into the ſame cauſe with the falſe notions they entertain'd of the *Meſſiah*, as *a temporal prince.* Let it not be thought incredible, that things *at firſt appearance* ſo very oppoſite as theſe two, the expectation of a *temporal Meſſiah*, and of *an unſeen and eternal reward*, ſhould have the ſame original. Once the cauſe hath been conſider'd, it will not be accounted at all ſtrange, that it ſhould produce both theſe effects. The cauſe, then, as I apprehend it, was that

ſtate

ſtate of ſervitude which that people, once the favourites of heaven, had been long in to *foreign powers*, by whom they were ſometimes treated in a moſt cruel and contumelious manner. The oppreſſions they lay under made them ſigh for deliverance; the hope of which inclin'd them to put ſuch a ſenſe on the *prophecies*, which ſpoke of the conqueſts of the *Meſſiah*, and the glories of his reign, as was but too agreeable to perſons that had been long trampled on by the *foot of pride*; and this ſenſe of the prophecies, ſo ſuitable to the genius and circumſtances of that people, was the more readily and univerſally embrac'd, becauſe they had no *living prophets* to interpret them better. We may allow alſo a *publick ſpirit*, and *love to their country*, to have had ſome influence upon them in falling in with this notion. Under their *national ſufferings*, it was a pleaſure to them to think, that however it went with particular perſons, who might not live to ſee the happy day, yet they ſhould live and die in the hope, that one time or other their nation would recover its liberty under their triumphant *Meſſiah*, and by him be rais'd to a more flouriſhing condition, and to a greater independence, and larger dominion, than it ever enjoy'd. But ſtill their *perſonal ſufferings*, or the perſecu-

tions and hardſhips which particular perſons endur'd, or were threaten'd with, in thoſe calamitous times, call'd for *other ſupports*, and *naturally* turn'd the thoughts of the *pious* among them, from the afflictions and diſtreſſes of the ſervants of God in this life, to the reward of their patience and faithfulneſs in the next. They had but little reaſon, in ſuch a melancholy ſtate of affairs, both private and publick, to ſet their affections on things here below; or to think that the ſcene would quickly change. They might die long enough before their nation enter'd into that *reſt* which they imagin'd was promis'd them: And is there *no other reſt remaining for the people of God?* doubtleſs there is. They were the more fully perſuaded of it, becauſe they ſo earneſtly deſir'd it; as their *deſire*, and *hope*, and *faith*, were all of them invigorated and enlarg'd by the *Spirit of God*, communicated to them in ſuch *a time of need*. And, after ſome had born their teſtimony to the truth, and, tho' tortur'd, refuſed to *accept deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection*, their *example* was of great uſe to confirm the faith, and raiſe the courage of thoſe that followed them.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The advantages which Chriſtians enjoy by the Goſpel-revelation, *in reſpect of life and immortality.*

Sect. I. AFTER all that hath been offer'd in favour of that part of mankind to whom a revelation was never vouchſaf'd, I am far from placing them on a level with the *followers of Jeſus.* Reaſon may be *ſufficient* to anſwer every end deſigned by it; and yet be very *inſufficient* in regard of thoſe farther ends for which revelation was given. A *more perfect* knowledge of thoſe things which reaſon gives but *obſcure notices* of, with the knowledge of other things *entirely new,* is the *immediate end* of revelation; as the end of this knowledge is a higher degree of every holy and divine diſpoſition of ſoul; and the end of theſe a more glorious recompence of reward. That we may be able to judge how the account ſtands between the Chriſtian and other men, with reſpect to the knowledge and attainment of a bleſſed immortality, I would propoſe theſe few things to be conſider'd.

Sect. II. *Nature* led the *virtuous heathen* to hope for happineſs in another life: but as to the *time*, the *nature*, the *degree*, and *duration*, of that happineſs, left him very much in the dark. He could not be ſure that death would put him in *immediate* poſſeſſion of his reward. The contrary was the opinion * of many, who diſtinguiſh'd ſouls into three claſſes; thoſe of eminent virtue, who, having vanquiſh'd the animal part, and by a courſe of contemplation and abſtinence deliver'd themſelves from its contagion, were no ſooner releas'd from the fetters of the body, than they were receiv'd into the number of the bleſs'd; others, who had too much indulg'd to the pleaſures and inclinations of the lower life, and ſo were oblig'd to paſs through ſome ſevere methods of purgation before they could be freed from the ſtains they had contracted in their fleſhly priſon; and a third ſort, who being grown incurable, were condemn'd to the regions of woe, without any hope of redemption from thence. What time was requir'd to prepare the ſouls of the middle kind for a ſtate of bliſs, according to the laws of the other world, they could not tell. It could not

* *Vid.* Plato's Phaedo, *and* Virgil's Æneid, *l.* 6.

be

be the ſame for all; and for ſome might be very conſiderable. But now from the Goſpel we learn, that all the *faithful*, upon their departure out of this life, go into a ſtate of repoſe and felicity, where they are *preſent with their Lord*, and *reſt from all the labours* of this mortal life. There are Chriſtians, indeed, to whom this advantage is loſt; I mean thoſe who believe the fable of *purgatory*, firſt borrow'd from the *Pagans*, for the profit which it was foreſeen a certain ſort of men would make of it, and afterwards pinn'd down on all of that communion as a neceſſary article of the *Chriſtian faith*. But as long as this notion hath no foundation in *primitive Chriſtianity*, it cannot be made an objection againſt *that*. The privilege is the ſame in it ſelf; tho', for want of a freer acceſs to the ſcriptures, it be unknown to great numbers. When the Heathen proceeded to enquire wherein the happineſs of the next life would conſiſt, he ſoon bewilder'd himſelf. He had no glimpſe of the *reſurrection of the body*; and could make but uncertain gueſſes as to the *freedom of intercourſe* which the ſoul would have with the *ſupreme Mind*. He could not be poſitive that the bleſſedneſs to come would be the higheſt poſſible, or (as moſt will

think) pretend to more than a *probability* of its being immutably fix'd and eternal. Whereas, by the *Chriſtian revelation*, we are made acquainted that *the Son of God*, in our nature, hath, by dying, purchaſed *immortality* for us: not for the *ſoul*, no ſuch thing is any where ſaid in ſcripture, but for *man*, who is a being compounded of ſoul and body, and the greateſt perfection of felicity in both; the body being faſhioned like to the glorious body of the Redeemer, and thereby made a fit inſtrument and companion to a pure and happy ſpirit, chang'd into the likeneſs of God, and favour'd with the viſion of his face; and this without all fear of *change*, or *period*.

Sect. III. Again; the vaſt diverſity in the *degrees of guilt* is ſufficient to ground a diſtinction of mankind into *two denominations*, the *righteous* and *ſinners*, and to juſtify the expreſſion of ſome mens *not needing repentance* in the ſame ſenſe that others do. Reaſon therefore cannot give thoſe whom we call *ſinners*, or *wicked men*, that is, ſuch as have advanc'd far in a courſe of ſin, or frequently relaps'd into it, tho' now penitent, the ſame aſſurance of pardon and happineſs, as it does the men who have been always, or for a long time conſcious to themſelves of an unfeigned

feigned deſire to do the will of God; becauſe the former having preſumptuouſly violated the *law of reaſon*, and after ſolemn engagements to the contrary repeated their offence, muſt know, that they have forfeited all title to the regard of their maker, and cannot have the ſame ſatisfaction concerning their repentance, as the latter. Now here the Goſpel moſt ſeaſonably comes in to our relief by its promiſes of forgiveneſs, founded in the atonement of *the great Redeemer*, of all degrees of ſin, and all ranks of ſinners.

Sect. IV. The advantages for *attaining to holineſs in this world, and happineſs in the next*, which the Goſpel puts into our hands, are many. The ſtruggle is ſuch between *reaſon* and *inclination*, and the difficulties ſo numerous which are to be ſurmounted in the aſcent to virtue and glory, that without ſuch meaſures of *divine aſſiſtance* as we have no right to promiſe our ſelves, and ſuch clear diſcoveries of the nature and degrees of felicity in another world as the *light of nature* cannot help us to, *but few*, in compariſon, will *warmly eſpouſe* the cauſe of virtue, and thoſe few will advance with diffidence and perplexity, leſt their vigilance and reſolution ſhould at laſt be overpower'd. On this account, the Chriſtian revelation, which

informs us of an *Almighty Spirit* communicated to all that ſincerely implore his help, to enlighten, ſanctify, aſſiſt, and comfort them, and delineates, in the moſt lively manner, the joys and glories of the *heavenly world*, cannot be too much priz'd; as it hereby excites to the purſuit of virtue and immortality, ſuch as would not have been wrought upon by lower motives, and inſpires thoſe with vigorous reſolutions, an humble confidence, and joyful hopes, who have choſen the ſide of religion. There are other ways in which the *Goſpel-revelation* contributes to the ſurer and eaſier acquiſition of future happineſs; having given us the moſt juſt and amiable repreſentation of the Deity, as the great object of *worſhip*, of *imitation*, and of *enjoyment*; hereby directing, and inſenſibly perſuading, us to worſhip him, as alone worthy of our adoration and truſt, and to *worſhip him in ſpirit and truth*; to ſeek the perfection of our nature, by endeavouring *to be perfect as our heavenly father is perfect*; and to make choice of him as our ſupreme and everlaſting portion, which will naturally leſſen our opinion, and abate our love, of earthly things, the conſequence of which will be, that we ſhall the more eaſily overcome all the temptations ariſing

from them. How plain and familiar is our duty made to us? and with what charms does virtue appear in the precepts of the Goſpel, ſo as not only to inſtruct, but allure us? and with ſtill greater in the *life of Jeſus*, which is ſuch an inforcement to his pure and heavenly commands, as no one, who dwells on the contemplation of it, will be able to reſiſt. Between the moſt excellent precepts, and ſuch an example, there is this difference; that the former exhibits only a picture of virtue, while in the latter it breathes and moves. I might add, the *whole ſyſtem of divine truths* contain'd in the Goſpel; which have the ſame tendency to enlarge the mind, to purify and exalt the affections, and to eſtabliſh the liberty of the will, as that *ſwarm of errors* which fill'd the *Pagan* world had to confine, to pollute, and enſlave the ſoul; and, above all, the *love of God, and of Jeſus*, which on all ingenuous ſpirits can never fail of producing the happieſt effects. Here then, there can be no room for a diſpute between reaſon and revelation, to which of them we are moſt beholden in the acquiſition of virtue and felicity.

Sect. V. It is, moreover, highly proper, that while we believe God's readineſs

neſs to forgive ſin, from the boundleſs compaſſions of his bleſſed nature, we ſhould conceive of ſin as the greateſt of all evils, and of God as having the utmoſt hatred and abhorrence of it, that we may the better know how to eſtimate his goodneſs and mercy in the pardon of ſin, and be ſet at a greater and more irreconcilable diſtance from it in our minds. But now what is there can give us ſo juſt and affecting an idea of theſe things, as the ſufferings and death of our Saviour, which, for this and other ends, God moſt holy and merciful was pleas'd to inſiſt upon as the price of our reconciliation?

Sect. VI. If we examine *the evidence it ſelf*, we ſhall find the Chriſtian is in a much better condition than the Heathen; for while the Heathen had reaſon only to truſt to, the Chriſtian hath both reaſon and revelation. Now, if we could even ſuppoſe the light which reaſon affords in this important affair to be equal to that of revelation; and that the bulk of mankind had all the *capacity*, *inclination*, *leiſure*, and *patience*, neceſſary to make the beſt of the argument (which is much more than can be ſuppos'd) yet, ſurely, the joint teſtimony of reaſon and revelation is to be preferr'd to that of reaſon

reaſon alone; ſince the additional evidence of revelation is ſo much *clear gain*. But this is not all. Reaſon was very much fetter'd and oppreſs'd, till revelation ſet it free, and gave us the truth, pure of all thoſe fabulous mixtures, which had not only diſguis'd it, but were a great weakening to it. * *Juvenal* takes notice, that in his time the ſtories of the infernal regions, the ſhades, and *Charon*'s boat, were the jeſt of children themſelves. And finding, there was no ground for thoſe *fables* which had once been in the ſame credit with the *general notion* of a life after this, too many were ready to conclude, that the whole was no better than a chimæra, or at beſt to be in doubt about it, not knowing how to ſeparate between *reality* and *fiction* when they were ſo blended, or not willing to be at the pains to do it. The very ſame had happen'd in the queſtions concerning the *nature of God*, and *divine providence*, about which the moſt learned and inquiſitive, by reaſon of the confuſion which had over-

* Eſſe aliquos manes, & ſubterranea regna,
Et contum, & ſtygio ranas in gurgite nigras,
Atque una tranſire vadum tot millia cymba
Nec pueri credunt, niſi qui nondum ære lavantur.
Sat. 2.

ſpread

ſpread the *Pagan theology*, did not diſcourſe in the moſt clear and conſiſtent manner. And of ſuch fatal conſequence was this *chaotick ſtate* of things, in which truth and error, light and darkneſs, lay jumbled together, that ſome turn'd *infidels*, others *ſcepticks*, on theſe fundamental articles of all religion. As this proves, that we cannot argue the *inſufficiency of the evidence* from the number of *doubters*, ſo it may convince us of our obligations to the *Chriſtian religion*, which by clearing the belief of a God, a providence, and future recompences, from the abſurdities that were mingled with it, hath reſtor'd theſe glorious truths to their native luſtre and certainty. The concurrence of revelation is the more valuable, as it is that which the world always expected, and were ſo fond of, as to fall in with every pretence of a revelation, rather than be wholly without it. When all things continue as they were from the beginning, and God never ſpeaks to men but by his works, the mind, naturally diſtruſtful, will be apt to ſuggeſt, that, perhaps, we are miſtaken in thoſe concluſions, which God hath never ſeen fit to ratify by any extraordinary manifeſtations of his will to mankind. All ſuch ſurmiſes are entirely obviated by the

the Goſpel of our Saviour. Which puts me in mind of the laſt thing.

Sect. VII. I ſhall add, *viz.* that the *ſatisfaction and acquieſcence* of the mind in any propoſition may not always be proportion'd to the *evidence* we have of its truth; but may either exceed, or fall ſhort of it. There are two things more eſpecially which leſſen the ſatisfaction that reaſon gives us in the preſent debate; the nature of *rational evidence*, and *guilt*. *Merely* rational evidence, whatever be its real weight, is not fitted to produce all that conviction which creatures, fram'd as we are, ſtand in need of. We are compounded of *body* and *mind*. The *ſenſes* belong to the body, *reaſon* to the mind, while *imagination* is allied to both. Now, tho' reaſon aſſure us of a future ſtate, yet our ſenſes giving us no encouragement to hope for it, either directly, or indirectly, without a revelation, and imagination being prejudic'd and carry'd away by ſenſe; ſuch thoughts as theſe are apt to offer themſelves. What if, after all, there ſhould be no world to come, where the ſoul, which we never ſaw, exiſts without the body, on which it does at preſent depend in its operations? No one hath ever re-

turn'd

turn'd from that world to give us an account of it; when a man dies, he ſeems to be falling away into a ſtate of inſenſibility. Theſe, indeed, are unreaſonable prejudices, and ſo acknowledg'd, when a man reflects upon them; but they are prejudices which it is not very eaſy to get rid of. And 'tis very probable, that if this did not give the *firſt riſe* to the ſtories of *ſpectres* and *apparitions*, it was yet the occaſion of their being *multiplied*, and entertain'd ſo readily. The ground of this was, that mankind were not willing to want a ſort of evidence, which would ſerve to ſilence the cavils and ſuſpicions of the imagination more effectually than rational evidence alone could do; and of this kind is that evidence which the *Chriſtian religion* ſupplies us with; not *immediately*, but at *ſecond hand*. *Miracles* are *ſenſible* effects; the Chriſtian doctrine of immortality hath been confirm'd by theſe; and, among other miracles, by the *reſurrection* of the divine author of our religion from the dead, and *aſcenſion* into heaven, in the ſight of a great number of ſpectators, of the truth of whoſe teſtimony we have no reaſon to doubt. Theſe proofs of the truth of our religion have this advantage above

above the proofs of a future ſtate from reaſon, that they affect the *imagination* more, and lay hold of the mind, as it is *embodied*; which its own *abſtract reaſonings* do not, ſo as to beget the ſame pleaſing acquieſcence in them. And having this advantage, as *proofs of our religion*, they have the ſame as *mediate* proofs of a *future ſtate*, which is plainly taught by this religion, in *writings* capable of being read and underſtood by all, and holding forth the truth with an uniformity that *reaſon* cannot pretend to; reaſon being like a lamp, that burns ſometimes brighter, at other times more dimly. This, I am perſuaded, was one cauſe of thoſe *doubts* which the wiſer Heathens ſeem to have labour'd under about a ſeparate ſtate of exiſtence, at the ſame time that they were arguing for it. If they were real doubts, they are not ſo likely to have proceeded from reaſon, as from a dark imagination. And 'tis remarkable that when they expreſs themſelves with the greateſt diffidence, 'tis in relation to any exiſtence at all beyond the grave, not of the happineſs of good men, ſuppoſing them to exiſt. Not but a conſciouſneſs of guilt, tho' it did not raiſe a jealouſy in the virtuous, of their being

being miſerable after death, might occaſion a doubt whether they ſhould be happy, and ſo add to the doubt, firſt ſuggeſted by the imagination, that poſſibly they might not be at all.

Sect. VIII. *Guilt* is apt to make men, thoſe *eſpecially* who have fallen into *greater ſins*, ſuſpicious, and fearful; as it is fit it ſhould, that, by this uneaſy ſituation of mind which it produces, they might, as it were *naturally*, be taught to be more cautious and circumſpect. Hence the doctrine of the rewardableneſs of ſincere virtue, tho' mix'd with many failings, which to one unconcern'd in the queſtion, as an *Angel* for inſtance, is manifeſt and certain; by another, whoſe very caſe this is, that his motion to good is not undivided, may not be entertain'd without ſome degree of diſtruſt and heſitation. Yea, which is more, the good man, who, being judge in his own cauſe, hath doubts hanging on his mind about his final ſtate, ſhall have none at all about another good man, or where the caſe is only ſuppos'd; notwithſtanding the degree of goodneſs, which in *hypotheſi* he believes ſufficient to entitle men to a reward in the next life, be really no greater than he is poſſeſs'd of.

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All theſe fears and doubts, which obſcure the evidence of this comfortable truth, are not to be removed any other way ſo well, as by the expreſs declarations of the love of God to *apoſtate man*; by kind and repeated invitations to truſt in the divine mercy; by bringing down the terms of acceptance as low as any wiſe and good man would deſire, in a *covenant* eſtabliſh'd for this purpoſe; and finally, by a clear and diſtinct account of the method taken to reconcile the different claims of *holineſs* and *goodneſs*; or, if you will, of *wiſdom*, pronouncing it *unfit*, that a reaſonable, virtuous, and naturally immortal being, ſhould be extinguiſh'd, only becauſe its virtue hath not that perfection which the preſent condition of the being will not admit of, and of the ſame *wiſdom*, declaring it *fit*, that God ſhould manifeſt his diſpleaſure againſt the ſins of men, in a way moſt proper to poſſeſs them with the greateſt hatred of ſin, and reverence to the divine law. Theſe are the moſt likely means of reſtoring peace to a miſgiving heart; and all theſe we find in the Chriſtian religion, which, for this very reaſon, every ſerious mind will eſteem *worthy of all acceptation.*

Sect. IX. The *concluſion* from the whole is, that *life and immortality are brought to light by the Goſpel.* The objects of the other world appear'd before as things beheld in the *twilight*, or by the light of the *moon*, and *ſtars*, not without a great deal of obſcurity and indiſtinctneſs; they are now enlightned by the noon-day. A ſcene of glory preſents it ſelf to our eyes. We know, how God came to be ſo liberal and kind to ſinful imperfect creatures, as to beſtow upon them a reward which innocence it ſelf could not claim. We know, how ſatisfaction was made to divine juſtice, and the gates of the *heavenly city* open'd for our admiſſion there. We ſee *Jeſus* dying as *our ſacrifice*, riſing as *our head*, aſcending to heaven as *our leader*, and taking poſſeſſion in *our name*; *whither he is gone we know, and the way we know.* Chriſtianity is perpetually ſetting the rewards of another world before our view, abounds with promiſes relating to a life after this, courts us to look off *from things ſeen to things unſeen*, to the glories of heaven, and the joys of eternity; and deſcribes, in the moſt particular manner, the character of thoſe for whom the future bleſſedneſs is deſign'd, that all ſuch may be encourag'd

encourag'd in well-doing, and chearfully ſubmit to the various trials and ſufferings of the preſent life, in hope of thoſe better things which God hath prepar'd for them that love him.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAGE 16. Line 2. read *by the natures.* p. 122. l. 2. r. *a ſtate of pre-exiſtence; for their ſins in which.* p. 129. l. 24. r. *refus'd it.* p. 150. l. 1. r. *and vigilance have avoided.*